

EDWARD HORNEY SHEARS

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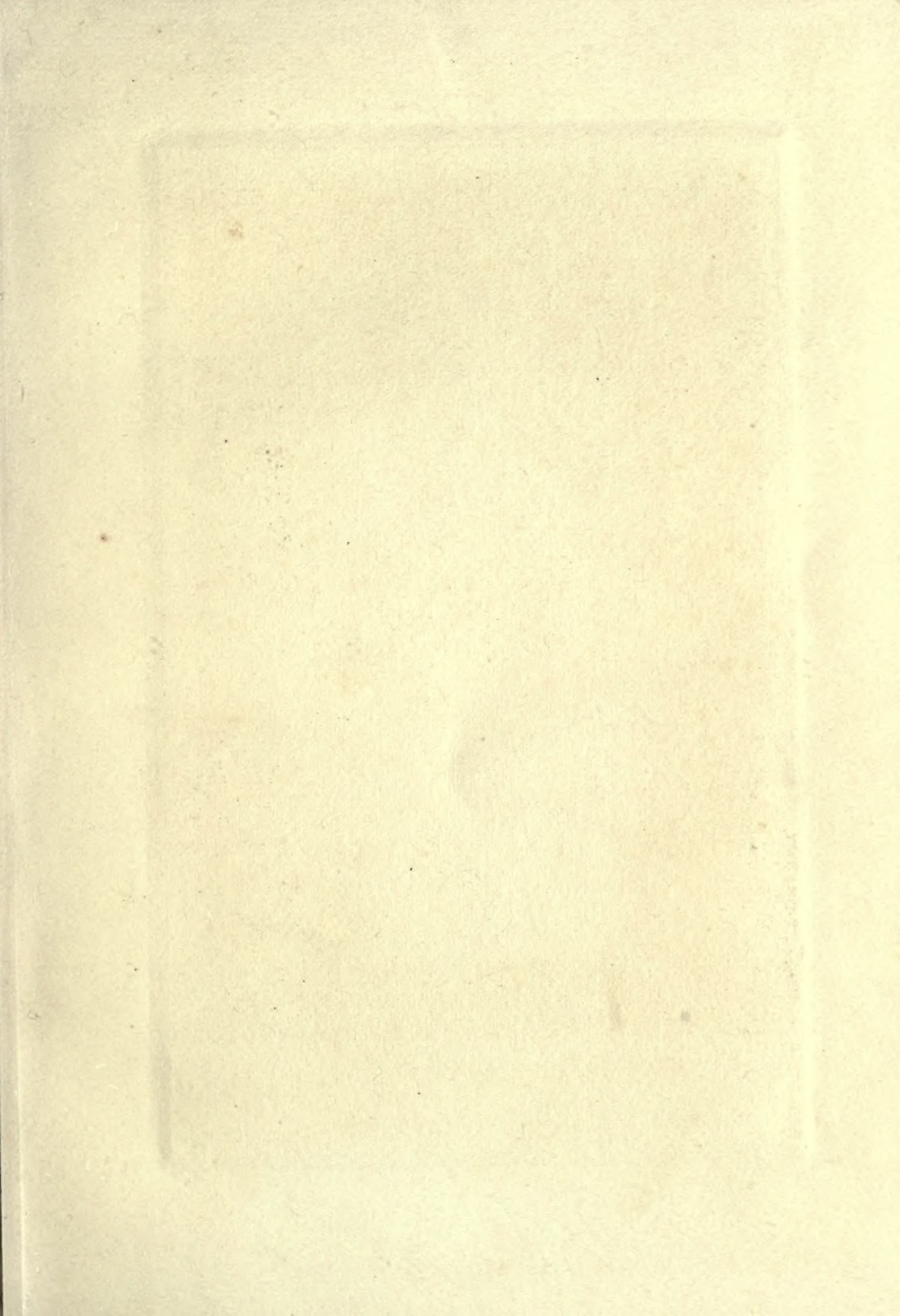
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ACTIVE-SERVICE DIARY

WILLIAM SERVICE QUAY





J. B. Beresford, photographer

Emery Walker p. 10

ACTIVE-SERVICE DIARY

21 JANUARY 1917—1 JULY 1917

BY

EDWARD HORNBY SHEARS

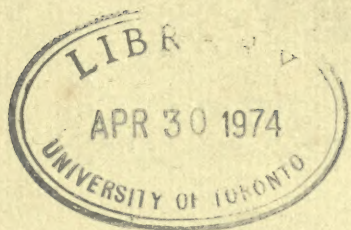
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FOREWORD

EDWARD HORNBY SHEARS was born in Liverpool on December 4, 1890. His preparatory school was The Leas, Hoylake (1900–1904). In July, 1904, he obtained a Foundation Scholarship at Bradfield, and in December 1908 a History Exhibition at Trinity College, Oxford. He went up to Oxford in October, 1909, and obtained a 'second' in 'Mods' in 1910, and a 'first' in 'Greats' in 1913. In September, 1913, he passed into the Home Civil Service, and was appointed to the Secretaries' Department of the General Post Office. A year later (October, 1914) he became Principal Private Secretary to the Postmaster-General, Mr. (now Sir Charles) Hobhouse. He had been refused official permission to join the army at the outbreak of the War, but he received it in May, 1915, and obtained a commission in the 3/4th Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. A few months later he was promoted to lieutenant. After training for a year and a half in England, and having no apparent prospect of being sent to the front, he obtained a transfer to the Irish Guards, in which he received his commission as ensign in

November, 1916. In January, 1917, he joined the 1st Battalion in France, where he was shortly promoted to lieutenant (dating from October 18, 1916). He was killed in action at Boesinghe on July 4, 1917, and on the following day he was buried at Canada Farm, Elverdinghe, near Ypres.

The following pages contain the diary which he kept from the day he received orders to proceed to France to the time of his death. It is not, like some war diaries, an elaborate literary narrative, but rather, as his friends would expect it to be, a simple, natural, business-like record of the day's work. It does not pick and choose its subjects, or dwell on those which were more exciting or more terrible—least of all on those experiences which few who endured them cared to talk about or wished to remember. It takes each day's happenings as they come, and is largely concerned, therefore, with the more tolerable and (in point of time) the larger part of the soldier's life at the front—the routine in billets and rest-camp, the precious hours of leisure, rides and walks and meals with friends, books and baths and clean clothes. And when fighting comes in its turn, there is no change of tone, no forcing of the note, not a touch of that nervous exaggeration which usually affects—and more or less distorts—a highly educated man's description of terrible events, and—it goes without saying—no heroics. The discomforts of the trenches, the effects of German shell-fire, the bearing and competence of his men, his own personal work (the

praise he received for it so typically discounted)—it is all set down quietly, soberly, candidly, methodically, without one slip into false sentiment or rhetoric. As a whole, the diary leaves in the reader's mind an extraordinarily vivid and lasting picture—a picture of a thoughtful and able man, adapting himself quickly and simply to a task for which his previous life had given him no special training; carrying it through to the end in a cool, efficient, and altogether selfless and unassuming fashion, and preserving, in acute personal danger and intense nervous strain, just as much as in the humdrum soldiering behind the lines, the same level-headed, business-like concentration on the work in hand. It is a picture of a typical Englishman; for it is just this steadiness, this sanity, this power of quietly doing what needs to be done, though the world be on fire and death itself at your elbow, that are generally regarded as the characteristic English virtues.

And in this picture of an Englishman his friends will find a wonderfully living and faithful portrait of the 'Teddy' Shears they knew and loved. This fine combination of simplicity and modesty, so natural and un-selfconscious, with an unsleeping sense of duty and a resolute will to get the duty done—this is what we always saw and prized in him. It was part of the attraction of his personality at Oxford that he seemed younger than his contemporaries, more ingenuous, more diffident, more boyish; but, in a sense, he was really older. He intensely enjoyed

his share in the varied life of the place; but all the while he was getting from it the best that it could give, socially, morally, intellectually. There were no better men in the College than those he made his friends. Everyone knew that 'Teddy' could be relied on to take the right line and do the right thing, especially if moral issues were involved. And when it came to work—which, after all, is the main business of the University—he showed an obstinate determination to do his best, and his best was better than what other men, with brains as good as his but not so tough a character, could do. It needs grit, as well as capacity and training, to get a 'first' in 'Greats' and a good place in the Civil Service list.

The purposefulness he showed at Oxford was manifest again in his choice of residence in London. He was one of that little company of Trinity men who gathered round Tom Allen at the Stratford Mission, living together at 13 Water Lane, and devoting their weekday evenings, and often a good part of Saturday and Sunday too, to the Boys' Clubs. Everybody knows the kind of work they did, and the value of it. But does everybody realise how arduous it was—what it meant to return home after a full day's work at the office, not to the amenities of the West End, but to the squalid surroundings of East London; not to a leisurely dinner, with a comfortable chair and a novel or a theatre or a concert to follow, but to a hasty meal and then an hour or so in the noise and heat and glare of the crowded club-room, with

the task of keeping order or organising committees or helping some lame duck over a stile, and talking and playing games and being cheerful and responsive all the time? . . . Had he heard his work at Stratford praised, Ted would have made light of it—he would have declared that he enjoyed it. And, indeed, however tired he might be and whatever his difficulties and disappointments, he was always patient and cheerful. It is an old saying that to be good is to be happy; and there are not many men in any generation coming down from Oxford, who would so freely choose that East End life and shoulder its responsibilities so loyally and ungrudgingly as he did and with such utter disregard of self. And he developed a peculiar aptitude for the work. It gave scope for his powers of organisation and for his grasp of detail. He was full of new schemes for after the War when his military service interrupted him. More than that, the splendid sincerity of his character won, as nothing else could, the respect, the admiration, the friendship of London boys. ‘If only you knew,’ wrote one of them after his death, ‘how he was loved by the club boys in Stratford, you would realise how greatly we feel the loss of such a great friend.’ ‘Teddy was admired by hundreds of folk round East London,’ wrote another. ‘He and I were great friends, and we spent many happy times together.’ The memory of Ted and his companions—for most of them, including Tom Allen, died in the War—will live long in Stratford homes. *‘Inasmuch as ye did it unto these. . . .’*

The Stratford life shows how seriously Ted regarded the responsibilities of citizenship. His interest in politics in the wider sense had been awakened at Oxford; and in all this busy time in London he found moments for reading and thinking about the State and its welfare. A convinced democrat, he saw, with a directness not always found in older minds, where the crux of democracy lay, and recognised that the ideal of a self-governing commonwealth can never be fulfilled until the great mass of its citizens are enabled to obtain a thorough education. Once, at Oxford, he met Mr. Albert Mansbridge, the founder of the Workers' Educational Association, and learned from him what the W.E.A. has done and has yet to do, both in this country and in the Oversea Dominions, to bring the best of a University education to working men and women. From that day on, he was an enthusiastic supporter of the W.E.A.; and knowing that its activities are constantly hampered by lack of funds, he bequeathed a sum of money to the W.E.A., 'which,' as he wrote in his will, 'is doing a work so vital to the success of our Democracy and which, I trust, may be widely developed in the near future.'

Life is not to be valued by length of days, but by the use that is made of them; and lesser men might live long without doing so much practical good work as Ted packed into that one crowded year in London. All too soon, that busy, happy existence was interrupted. To him as to all his friends the outbreak

of war presented a simple, obvious duty—none the less simple and obvious to him because it involved the free offer of life itself to the cause of England and of freedom. But he had proved himself so efficient and reliable a civil servant that for many months he could not be allowed to join the army. He did his best to pass the time by working hard at the G.P.O., and at the Mission to make up for the absence of those he deemed more fortunate than himself; but they were trying days, all the more trying after the death in action of his friend and Stratford ‘chief,’ Tom Allen. But at last his wish was granted, and he set himself with characteristic thoroughness to master his new vocation, only to be once more disappointed by the tedious delay which followed the completion of his battalion’s training. Chafing at inaction, burning to confront the actual ordeal to which he had dedicated himself, and fearing at last that the physical standard of his battalion was not high enough to allow of its being quickly sent on active service, he ‘transferred’ to the Irish Guards—Tom Allen’s regiment—and so obtained his desire. In a few weeks’ time he was ordered to France.

At this point the diary begins its record of the last five months of Ted’s life. The scene has been shifted; the environment of the Bapaume road and the Ypres salient is very different from that of Trinity and Water Lane; but the personality, revealed so naturally and unconsciously in these pages, remains unshaken and unchanged. The singleness of heart,

the modesty, the steady, selfless, practical devotion to duty until the moment comes for the ultimate self-sacrifice—in all this, the close is of one piece with what had gone before.

Those of his friends who have survived him will never be able to put into words what they feel about him, what he has meant and means to them in his life and in his death. We shall cherish each his own uncommunicable memory of Ted; and, mindful of his example, we shall try, as each can, to be worthy of his friendship.

C.

ACTIVE SERVICE DIARY

1917

Monday, January 22nd.—The news that we really were to start to-morrow, reached me by telephone at the Maunsells' just after dinner. The part of it that upset me was the parade hour next morning, which was to be 5.45 A.M. Otherwise I was unfeignedly glad, as there are few things more unsatisfactory than a series of postponements from one day to the next. I left early in order to get as much of a night's rest as possible, and Major Maunsell insisted on my taking with me a bottle of Curaçoa to share with Major Young in the trenches. So laden, I returned to barracks, and turned in at about 10 P.M.

Tuesday, January 23rd.—I was called at 4 A.M., and soon got dressed, and put the finishing touches to my packing. Breakfast, and then on to parade. The Commanding Officer inspected the draft, and said a very few words to them. It was quite dark, of course, and very cold. Then good-bye to everybody. All the officers had turned out to see us off. We marched off to the accompaniment of the drums and pipes, and slithered down to the station, the

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road very nearly resembling a sheet of ice. The darkness robbed the occasion of many of its thrills, as one could not see the people who were shouting their good-byes, and the townsfolk had naturally not turned out in large numbers at that hour of the morning. I naturally thought of Tom's¹ departure from Warley almost exactly two years ago, and was amused to find the same old green flag being waved from the upper window of a public house on our road, which he mentions in his diary. Its owner is evidently not easily deterred.

We entrained our 230 men in a siding outside Brentwood Station, and then Major Bird and I settled ourselves for the journey. We went right through to the port of embarkation, skirting London on the north, and reached it at 11.45 A.M. There followed a wait of about three hours, during which we got some lunch at a very inferior restaurant sandwiched in amongst the docks.

At 2.45, the draft paraded again, and after a short pause the draft-conducting officer arrived on the scene and appointed me his adjutant for the voyage. He struck me as a very pleasant, mild-mannered old man, but I learned that he was Colonel Grant, V.C., D.S.O., so there must be more in him than appears on the surface. My duties were not onerous, and consisted mainly in digesting the various standing orders, most of which proved to partake of the nature of dead letters in practice; and in

¹ Tom Allen, second lieutenant Irish Guards: formerly head of the Trinity Oxford Mission, Stratford, London, E. Killed in action February 1915.

arranging for the few necessary duties on the voyage. They involved a share of the C.O.'s cabin, which was an advantage. Our ship was a Glasgow river-boat, very little larger than Mersey ferry-boats. She carried between seven and eight hundred men, who lay and sat about all over the various decks. There were three cabins for the officers, and those who could had mattresses, while the rest did without. Soon after 4 we sailed, and at 5.30 we had a very excellent meat-tea; none too early either, as the ship was already wobbling rather. Then back to our cabins; and our natural feelings were in no way ameliorated by the sight of the men, who had no appliances for being ill politely, and who had to make the best of things where they were. I lay down at once, and slept restlessly for five or six hours. Fortunately I remained well. At about midnight we reached our destination, and streamed off the ship on to the quay.

Wednesday, January 24th.—The cold was intense, as indeed it had been all day, but I was now, and remained, astonishingly warm, and felt very grateful for the fur collar I had purchased for my coat the previous day. The water in my water-bottle was frozen absolutely solid. There was no difficulty about parading, owing to the abundance of light. I found nothing about France more welcome than the evident absence of any orders for the restriction of lights. We marched off at 12.25 A.M., and trudged through the docks, and then through the straggling town. Both its size and industry surprised me:

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there were many factories working away through the night. Finally we emerged into the long straight country roads, and at 2.30 passed by Harfleur Halte and came to the Guards Division Base Camp. The men were quickly dismissed to their tents, and we found a warm meal awaiting us at the Officers' Mess. After it, Major Bird and I were shown our small hut, where we found our kit all laid out, and beds ready for us—a great joy, as we hardly dared to hope it had yet left Havre. So we went to bed again, and slept until 8.30 A.M. Then we were called by a sergeant, who told us that the men were parading for kit inspection at 9 o'clock. We rose and dressed hastily. Sponges, &c., were frozen as hard as iron, and outside the earth was as adamant. Kit inspection, then breakfast, then inspection by the Commanding Officer here, Major Royds (Scots Guards). Next, lunch. There are about thirty officers in the Mess, which is exceedingly comfortable, and the whole camp, which is one of many on the side of this hill, is beautifully laid out. After lunch I helped to censor some of the men's letters—a laborious process, as their number is so colossal, even though one only examines two or three in every dozen. Then Ball, one of our officers who is attached to the camp, Major Bird and I, took a taxi into Havre, and I changed my money at Cox's. The town is full of English soldiers, but otherwise I found it very French, and was reminded of my visit to France five years ago. Back here for tea, and spent the evening in the Mess.

I hardly think I have emphasised sufficiently above, the appalling cold that prevails here. It is like nothing that I have ever experienced, and must make life very miserable for the men, and in the trenches, too, for *all*; and I rather expect we shall start off for them to-morrow night.

Since writing the above, I have had fresh reason to realize the cold, as I shivered all this night, and kept waking up with frozen toes. I also had slight indigestion as a result of the monstrosly long dinner in Mess here—seven courses, and they not of the plainest: tiring and altogether unsuitable, I think.

Thursday, January 25th.—I did not get up very early, as we were due to remain in camp owing to the prospect of our leaving for the trenches to-night. However, it proved that only Major Bird and a few warrant officers were to go; the rest of us to carry on here for the present. So I proceeded up the hill to the Central Training School. This is on a plateau, some miles both in length and breadth, and immediately above the camp. Every form of training goes on there, and it took me quite a long time to find the men of the Brigade, who were receiving instruction in gas. We broke off at 12.30, and officers hurried down to lunch, being back at the school by 2. The men remained up there, and had to keep going on two biscuits and a lump of cheese—not very sustaining, as the only meal between 6.15 A.M. and 4.30 P.M. At 3.30, we formed up with the whole of the school, at which were representatives of a great number of

the units of the Imperial Army, and then marched back to camp. Tea and yesterday's *Times* occupied me more or less until dinner, which was almost as prolonged as yesterday's. After dinner, Major Bird and three officers left us to go up the line. I am sorry Bird has gone, as he is a pleasant man, though rather of the dour, unconvivial type. That leaves me in charge of our detachment. Again early to bed.

Friday, January 26th.—To-day was devoted to interior economy, which did not mean very much work for me. I was up in time to inspect rifles at 8.45 A.M., and my next duty was the inspection of kit at 11.30 A.M. In the interval I read *The Times*: it is a great joy getting the previous day's paper so soon and so regularly. In the afternoon four of us ensigns went for a walk through Harfleur, and then up the valley. We had a look at Harfleur Church on the way, but, although it is stately, I did not find it particularly attractive. It was quite pretty up the valley, and when we had gone a certain distance we cut across by side-tracks, and ultimately returned to camp from the other side. Nothing much else to-day beyond feeding and letter-writing.

Saturday, January 27th.—I was up early this morning, and marched the men up the hill to the parading ground. Parade was at 7.50. There we did some bayonet fighting under an instructor for the first part of the morning, and for the second watched the men climbing obstacles. Our Irishmen seemed incredibly clumsy and slow-moving, in spite

of their obviously good physique and strength: I suppose the fact is that they are mostly countrymen and have never taken part in athletics of any kind. At 12.30 we formed up again, and marched back to camp. After lunch I went in to Havre with a Coldstream ensign, named Saunders. We just missed a tram, so had to walk a good part of the way, and when we had got a tram it was soon run into by a big motor lorry, and so damaged that we had to get out and walk the remainder of the way. In Havre we had our hair cut and a shampoo, and then tea at a restaurant called Tortoni's, much frequented by the British officer, in the Place Gambetta. I find my French very rusty, when I try to converse with waiters. I can manage the construction of the sentences all right, but can't remember the words. After tea we went to the Continental Hotel, and much enjoyed a hot bath. Then back to dinner at Tortoni's, and afterwards to a play at the Havre Theatre in aid of the 'Croix Rouge.' I could not understand much of it, but I think it was a poor show, and that I did not miss a great deal. I met Pedley, late of Trinity, in the theatre: he is now in the K.R.R., and just returning from leave. We left before the finish of the piece, and were back in camp by 11.30.

Sunday, January 28th.—I was wakened at 7.30 this morning to find that I had to take the Roman Catholic Church Parade at 8.30, so my breakfast was indefinitely postponed. We marched down to Harfleur Church, and the service was conducted by

an English priest. The church, though not a small one, was packed with soldiers from every arm of the Service, and in spite of the intense cold their reverent bearing made the whole proceeding very impressive. I got back to breakfast at 10. After a little letter-writing, I proceeded into Havre, walking until I was able to board a tram which overtook me, and met Pedley at Tortoni's. We lunched together, and then went for a good walk about the town and along the front, which I had not seen before. It must be a pleasanter town in summer than I had realised before. We had tea at the Officers' Club, a most comfortable place, which has been set up in the town by the ubiquitous Y.M.C.A., and appears to be run with their usual efficiency. It was rather crowded, but the tea was first-rate and the rooms most comfortable. There I left Pedley. He is a very nice fellow, and I really enjoyed the afternoon with him. Then back to camp for the evening.

Monday, January 29th.—I did not have to get up at a very early hour to-day, as the Irish Guards were not parading until 9.45 for musketry. I marched 100 of them down to the 30-yards range in the Canadian Camp about a mile away, and they all fired fifteen rounds—not badly either. Then back to camp for lunch. In the afternoon we went up the hill and did some bayonet fighting. The wind, which was very troublesome on Saturday, had now died down, making conditions for the platoon a lot pleasanter, as nothing is so trying there as an icy

wind. Back here to tea, and spent the evening in the camp.

Tuesday, January 30th.—I am several days late in writing my account of to-day's doings, so I may have forgotten them a little. However, I know I began to-day to feel exceedingly weary of the Central Training School, and to wish they would make haste to send me on to the battalion. As a matter of fact I did not go up there early, as I had made an appointment last night to see the camp dentist at 9 o'clock. I thought that I had a small abscess developing; however, even before I had seen him, I felt convinced that I had been wrong and wished I had not made the appointment, as it was causing me no pain at all. He decided that it was simply a fragment of an old tooth working out through the gum, and that there was nothing to be done to it. The Irish Guards were doing bombing, morning and afternoon, and I had nothing to do but to look on—not a very exhilarating pastime. There is nothing else to record of my doings this day.

Wednesday, January 31st.—To-day I went up the hill early with the rest. It was not quite so cold, but was snowing spasmodically, so that ordinary training was practically impossible. The men therefore engaged in warming games, &c., for the first part of the morning. Then General Sir H. Rawlinson, commanding the 4th Army (in which is our division), came along, and we marched past him just as we were. He chatted with various senior officers of the camp, as a result of which several

rumours percolated through to the camp—one, that the battalions of the Division at the front were so well up to strength that they would not be needing big drafts yet awhile; another, that the big push was not coming off for some months yet. Probably both of them unauthentic. Later in the morning we did bayonet fighting, and in the afternoon listened to lectures on it. When we got back to camp, I paid the men—a long job, as one has to sign every man's pay-book when doing it. This made me too late to attend the Grenadier Band's Concert. They had arrived here the previous night, and are staying in the camp for a few days. In the evening I played Patience.

Thursday, February 1st.—To-day I was picquet officer, a post which involves the performance of a multitude of small duties, none of them very arduous. The first was at 6.15, when I had to parade the men for breakfast. There followed one or two minor duties, and in the morning I went round and inspected the camp. During the morning a biggish draft arrived from England, and also three of our own officers—Synge, Butler-Stoney, and Rodakowski. I was very glad at their coming, and though I only knew Synge before, I soon got to know the others and to like them all. Butler-Stoney, though only a subaltern, is forty-two years of age; Rodakowski is not as foreign as he sounds: in fact he is entirely English in appearance and indeed in himself, and is an old Carthusian and B.N.C. man. Synge is an old Wykehamist, and nearly came up to Trinity

ten years ago. All three are due for the 1st Battalion, and are as nice a trio as I have met in the regiment—particularly refined sort of men.

At 4.30 I mounted guards, &c., and then another officer answered for me while I went off to a concert given by the Grenadiers' Band. It consisted entirely of popular music, and suited me excellently. They are extremely good. My last duty was at 10, so I was not very late getting to bed.

Friday, February 2nd.—This morning we all awoke frozen absolutely to the marrow: in fact the cold had given me rather a restless night. It was far the coldest night we have had here, and that is saying a good deal. In the morning we went for a short march. In the afternoon a kit inspection. Then Stoney, Rodakowski, and I went into Havre, walking for the first part of the way and then getting a tram, in which we stood packed like sardines. In Havre we found a wonderful little Patisserie—a shop with no pretensions, but delightful home-made cakes. There we had tea, and over-ate ourselves on the cakes. Afterwards we went to the Officers' Club and had hot baths. Then we returned to camp, walking three-fourths of the way as the trams were so full and crowded. In orders this evening I found myself posted to the 1st, instead of the 2nd Battalion. I was quite glad, as Bagenal is in the 1st, and the others here with me are supposed to be going there.

Saturday, February 3rd.—This morning we went for a four-hours' march through Montivilliers and

back—a dull road, skirted for most of the way by hideous French villas. The church at Montivilliers, however, looked very fine. The march discipline was not very good, and it is doing the men harm sticking here away from their proper battalions. In the afternoon, Synge and I and a Welsh Guards officer went into Havre, and I introduced them to the Patisserie, where we all enjoyed the cakes. Then we made a few purchases, and in the town I met Chadwick, of Trinity and the K.R.R., who has just come down here for a rest, and is in the camp next to ours. Back by taxi. It is not quite so cold this evening, but still no news of our moving on.

Sunday, February 4th.—I was one of the officers detailed to attend the Church of England parade this morning. We had what might be described as a rousing service by a young chaplain with rather the manner of a popular orator, but who held them very effectively. Later in the morning I wrote letters, and helped to censor the men's letters too. And Synge lent me some War Poems of Rupert Brooke, the young poet who was killed in the Dardanelles. One of them I learned by heart, and will write out here, as it seems to me so admirable an epitaph for any soldier.

‘*The Soldier*’

‘*If I should die, think only this of me :*

That there's some corner of a foreign field

That is for ever England. There shall be

In that rich earth a richer dust concealed ;

*A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
 Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
 A body of England's, breathing English air,
 Washed by the rivers, blessed by suns of home.
 And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
 A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given ;
 Her sights and sounds ; dreams happy as her day ;
 And laughter, learnt of friends ; and gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.'*

In the afternoon, Butler-Stoney and I and two other officers went for a walk to Montivilliers to see the church there. A great part of it is Norman, and the whole very fine. There was a service going on, so we could only look at it from the door, but the view down the aisle, with the service going on at the far end, and the choir-boys in their red capes, was most picturesque. We had tea at a Patisserie and then walked home. The evening I spent in the Mess.

Monday, February 5th.—To-day was pleasantly warmer, and it was no pain at all dressing, although I was on a Fatigue, and had to get up at a quarter to six. It was snowing a little, which was the reason of the increased warmth. We marched off at 7.15, a party of 5 officers and 250 men, to an Ordnance Dump about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, and spent the morning moving stuff from canal barges and piling it by the side of the canal. The snow increased in volume and conditions were pretty bad, but during an

interval in the work we found our way to the cabin of one of the barges, where they gave us some very welcome tea, and received us with the utmost hospitality. After that we kept warm by working with the men. At noon the men stopped work for dinner, and owing to the weather we returned to camp after dinner instead of going back to work. Soon after we got back to camp the snow stopped, and it was the mildest afternoon we have had in France. I started to read 'The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman,' by H. G. Wells, after tea. At dinner we three Irish Guards junior officers drank champagne with Synge in honour of his birthday. Early to bed, as usual.

Tuesday, February 6th.—There had been a hard frost during the night, which was a particularly cold one, and the surface of the earth was consequently a sheet of frozen snow. The men were occupied during the morning in clearing paths, &c., while we had nothing special to do. In the afternoon we went for a short route march, and after tea I went on with 'The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman.' Between 6 and 7 the startling news arrived that 650 men and 11 officers were to go up the line next morning, parading at about 5 A.M. I was to be of the party, but none of our other three subalterns were going. I packed up my valise, leaving out only three blankets and a few necessities for the night, and at about 10 o'clock took off my coat and boots and wrapped myself up in the blankets, prepared for a short night's rest. However, I had not been in bed for five minutes, when in came Butler-Stoney with the news

that we were not to start at an early hour next day, but to stand by until further orders. I was therefore able to cancel my instructions to my servant to call me at 3.30 A.M., and to substitute 8 A.M.

Wednesday, February 7th.—Fortunately, the night was a little warmer than usual, as I had less than my usual covering. After breakfast I made a separate bundle of my blankets, &c., and we sat down to await further orders. During the morning we inspected the men's kits, and after lunch I paid them. Still no orders. Our wonderful military organisation, after causing so considerable a panic last night, now seems disposed to leave us severely alone. So the day passed. I finished 'The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman' during the evening, but I think it is far from being one of Wells' best. After dinner I unpacked my bed things, as it seemed clear we were to have another night here. Then Rodakowski and I amused ourselves by reading some Horace together.

Thursday, February 8th.—To-day was spent like yesterday, standing fast, and waiting for the move that never came off. The order came through early that we were to be ready to move at short notice, so after breakfast I had to pack up my belongings again, and we were not even able to go for a route march. In the afternoon I got leave to go into Havre for an hour or two and get a bath. Syngé and I went together, and got a lift into the town in an army motor. We got excellent hot baths in the

'Bains Hydropathiques,' and returned to camp in a taxi. After tea I started reading 'The Glory of Clementina Wing,' by Locke.

Friday, February 9th.—Like yesterday we stood fast for the whole day; but our departure now seemed less imminent, and it was not therefore necessary to remain packed up and ready to move on no notice at all. We went for a short march in the morning. In the afternoon I finished reading my book—quite an interesting story—and in the evening played Patience and Bézique.

It is a strange life—this everlasting standing fast—and a very idle one. I hope it will not go on much longer. The frost still continues, but not quite so violently as a few days ago.

Saturday, February 10th.—This morning we went for a short route march (about eight miles), up the hill beyond Harfleur (the road was a sheet of frozen snow, and therefore difficult to negotiate), round by a Belgian camp, and back on the Seine side of the hill, from which we got a very jolly view. On reaching camp we learned that we really were to make a start that evening. After lunch I got my packing done, and spent the remainder of the afternoon reading. The men, and one officer per regiment, paraded at 7 o'clock, and marched into Havre. I was one of the officers not included in this party, and had to report at the Camp Adjutant's Office at 8.45. I was therefore able to get a good dinner in the Mess before starting off. At 8.30 I took a fond farewell of Synge, Rodakowski, and Butler-Stoney, and started

off. I was very sorry to leave them behind me, as I had become very attached to all three. However, the last two are for the 1st Battalion, so I shall, no doubt, see them again. Altogether, I think my stay at the Depot has raised my opinion of the Guards officer, as apart from our own officers, whom I liked so much, pretty well all who passed through the Depot were very good fellows; while the Adjutant, Arthur Boyd-Rochford, V.C., Scots Guards, was a tremendous character. Of course the Depot was very comfortable, so that, taken all in all, I could not have had a better place in which to spend three (or nearly three) idle weeks.

From the Camp Adjutant's Office we were whirled down to the railway station (sixteen of us) in a motor lorry—the first travelling under somewhat active-service conditions I had experienced, for there was no provision at all for our comfort—we just sat or stood as we best could. At the station we entrained into the longest train I have ever come across—fifty-two coaches, I think, it carried; the men crammed in goods vans (thirty-five in each), but luxurious accommodation for the officers. I shared a first-class carriage with Blackwood (Lord Basil) of the Grenadiers, a pleasant, elderly ensign, and we each had one seat to lie down on. I had a small package in the carriage with me, containing a few blankets, so was able to make myself quite comfortable.

Sunday, February 11th.—We were in the train for about five hours before moving off, but I slept quite well, and was very warm. Soon after 7 I got

up, as we were expecting to reach Rouen. At about 9, we stopped just outside Rouen Docks Station, and after waiting there for an hour or so, steamed into the station; a few of the men who had got out to fetch water either following on foot or clinging on behind. At the station the trucks disgorged their occupants, and we learned from the R.T.O. that we were not to go on at all that day. We had therefore to march out three miles to the big English Reinforcement Camp and find quarters there. This we did at the 46th Infantry Base Depot. They were fairly full as it was, and found room for us with difficulty. The men were crammed eighteen in a bell-tent. I got in a small hut with Blackwood, where we prepared to sleep on the floor. After a bad lunch, most of us proceeded into Rouen by tram, and had a good tea at the Hôtel de la Poste—the hotel I had happened to dine at on my visit here nearly six years ago. After tea I wandered round and enjoyed seeing St. Ouen and St. Maclou again, the latter with its wonderful old glass. By the time I reached the Cathedral it was getting rather dark, and I could see little but the pillars in the nave stretching impressively upwards towards the roof. I walked back to the camp for dinner, and turned in at 9.30 to my bed on the floor—very comfortable for all that.

Monday, February 12th.—It was an exceptionally cold morning, but I had kept quite warm in bed on the floor. We had to be up for breakfast by 8 o'clock, and the quality of the meal was exceedingly poor. During the morning we inspected the men, their

rifles, gas helmets, &c., and at about 11 we received definite orders that we were to entrain that afternoon at 3 o'clock. We were all very glad to get clear of the camp. Perhaps it is because I have been spoiled by the luxuries of Harfleur, but certain it is I have never disliked food more than there, and the occupants of the Mess seemed a peculiarly poor lot. I went into Rouen with Major Chichester, and we lunched together at the Hôtel de la Poste, where we did ourselves as well as possible, knowing that it was our last civilised meal for some time. At 3 we entrained—this time four officers to a carriage, and I was in with Chichester, Blackwood, and Captain Baggallay¹ (also going up to the 1st Battalion). We had a fair amount of food on board, which we had brought with us from Harfleur. We hung fire at Rouen Station for about nine hours. We had some tea from the station canteen, and then settled down in our carriages. At about 7 we dined comfortably, and after reading for a bit (I had a book called 'David Penstephen' with me, which Synge had given me before starting, and which kept me interested during the journey) we wrapped ourselves up in blankets and settled down for the night. Each of us had only half a seat, but slept well notwithstanding.

Tuesday, February 13th.—I slept comfortably until about 7 o'clock. Then we all arose and brewed ourselves cocoa with the aid of the invaluable Tommy's Cooker. Followed breakfast on hard-boiled

¹ Captain R. R. C. Baggallay, D.S.O., M.C., now acting Lieutenant-Colonel.

eggs, tongue, &c. Then an attempt at a wash in a few drops of precious water. We were making quite good progress now, steaming slowly and with frequent stops at small stations, where we managed generally to replenish our water-supply. Amiens was the first big place we reached, and thereabouts we had lunch. Soon after (at Méricourt) we dropped that part of the draft which belonged to the 3rd Brigade, and thereafter all the country we passed through bore very distinctly the mark of war—no signs of cultivation—nothing but camps or ground worn by camps that had now left it. At about 5 o'clock we reached the Plateau Station, which stood not very far from where No Man's Land must once have been. There we detrained in the twilight, and I learned that Baggallay and his draft were going to pass right by the camp which the 1st I.G. occupied. I therefore got my kit on the limber which had come to meet them, and marched up with him and his men. It was about four or five miles—through Maricourt and Hardécourt to the region of Maurepas. It was too dark to see anything of the country except that it was desolate. The camp I found to be on the reverse side of a hill between Hardécourt and Maurepas, some three miles, I suppose, from our present front line. The men were in tents, the officers in biggish huts with round roof, one for Nos. 1 and 2 Companies, another for 3 and 4, and another for H.Q. Here we lived and ate and slept (this on wire-topped beds). The Battalion was in Brigade Reserve (two battalions of the 1st Brigade being in the line and

we and the fourth in reserve). I found myself posted to No. 3 Company, but sleeping in Nos. 1 and 2's hut. I was just in time for dinner, a simple meal, consisting of meat, vegetables, and tinned stuffs, and eaten with primitive implements with newspapers for tablecloths, but very good. After dinner and a little talking, I got my kit unpacked and to bed. Bagenal¹ was the only officer I found here, whom I had known at Warley, but curiously enough the acting adjutant here was the same Reford whom Thomas Higham² had coached in 1913-14 and I had once met at Clifton. I went to sleep to the sound of guns, booming one after the other, and found my quarters the warmest I had slept in since I left England.

Wednesday, February 14th.—I did not have to get up at a very early hour to-day, but was breakfasting soon after 9. The only parade I had to attend was an inspection of the men, their rifles, and their helmets. Drill under the N.C.O.'s occupied the remainder of the morning. One inspection was interrupted in the middle by three blasts on a whistle, which denoted the approach of a Hun aeroplane. The men scattered to their tents, and we watched its flight under fire. Some hundreds of shells must have been fired at it, and the whole sky was plastered with puffs of smoke, but to no purpose: the Hun escaped. Later in the day we saw a meeting between a Hun and a British aeroplane, which resulted in the retreat of both towards their respective lines.

¹ Lieut. Nicholas B. Bagenal—wounded five times.

² Scholar of Trinity College, Oxon., 1910-1913; elected to a Fellowship, 1914.

In the afternoon I got my possessions sorted out, read the paper (we had yesterday's *Times* here), and wrote home. At 4 I had to mount duties, as my company was on duty to-day. After tea I played Bridge, and at 7 saw the men's rum served out. After dinner a little more Bridge. Then I turned out the Quarter Guard before retiring to bed.

Thursday, February 15th.—To-day the battalion was to relieve the 2nd Grenadiers in the trenches west of St. Pierre Vaast Wood, two companies in the front line and two in support, and the several companies changing over in the middle of the tour of duty, i.e. after two days: my company was to be in reserve for the first two days. On our left were the 3rd Coldstreamers, who had relieved their 2nd Battalion yesterday, and together we held the front of the Guards Division, each Brigade doing the duty for sixteen days in turn. We were the southernmost division of the 14th Corps, which had two of its divisions (out of four) in the line, and in the 4th Army. Our part of the line was a quiet one, both sides being content, as we understood, to remain for a time on the defensive.

The morning was occupied with a testing of our new Box Respirators in a gas chamber, followed by the washing of feet with special grease as a protective against frost-bite. Then we packed our valises, which were to be stored in the camp, keeping out a small bundle of stuff to be used in the trenches. Packing was finished by about 2 o'clock, and we hung about for the best part of two hours, until it

was time to parade. I, with Captain MacMahon, were the only officers with No. 3 Company, and I marched up in rear of the last platoon. The march was a slow one, with frequent checks ahead, and it was quite dark before we met our guides and filed into the trenches. The Company was Left Reserve Company, and our line consisted of five isolated posts over a front of about three-fourths of a mile, the largest one holding two platoons and company headquarters and a comfortable little dug-out with two makeshift beds for MacMahon and myself. The work of handing over was done entirely by the C.S.M. and Platoon Sergeants, and I was now to learn that, although the officer in the Brigade of Guards has much greater responsibilities here than at home, here, as at home, the spade-work is done entirely by the N.C.O.s. Another discovery I made was that our feeding in the trenches was on a comparatively magnificent scale—that is to say, we did get regular hot meals, primitive, of course, but quite good, and served up to us by our servants. After dinner MacMahon, the C.S.M. and myself went round to visit our posts. The paths connecting them hardly showed up at all by night, and it was difficult to find the way, as the ground was pitted all over with shell craters, and there were few landmarks. When we got back we turned in to bed. Although only 500 yards from the front line, we were protected from view of the German line by the lie of the ground, and as there was very little artillery fire on either side, the position was an exceedingly safe one. At

about 11 o'clock I retired to bed for a few hours, and at about 2 went round our posts with my orderly—an excellent fellow called Wallace. I had always thought myself possessed of a fair sense of direction, but Wallace's sense was twice as acute as mine, and many times he saved me from missing the direct route between the posts. One is not allowed to move about in the line at all without an orderly, so I soon got to know him well, and to rely on him accordingly. Then again to bed until stand-to an hour before daybreak.

Friday, February 16th.—At dawn and at dusk, according to an ancient ritual, all men have to stand to arms in the trenches. It is a tedious procedure, as dawn in the winter is not a magnificent event. The day was spent in eating and pottering round the posts. The actual trenches we occupied were quite exceptionally good—all very well floored and revetted, and while the frost lasted the gaps between the posts quite comfortable to traverse. However, during the day the thaw started, and one then had to wade through mud to get from post to post. Quite early in the day the Brigadier (Jeffreys by name) visited us to criticise and make suggestions (helpful ones too). He seems a strenuous person, and was always round early in the morning to see us. We had various other visitors during the day, including the acting Commanding Officer, Major Alexander, D.S.O., M.C., quite young, and I believe very popular and gallant. Our chief interest during the day was from the air. Both German machines

and ours hovered above us in turn until driven back by artillery fire. The 'supremacy of the air' seemed in question. The shrapnel sometimes fell near us, and I picked up and preserved one bullet which fell a few feet from me. Otherwise there was nothing to record during the day, and the night passed like the previous one.

Saturday, February 17th.—To-day was just like yesterday until dusk, except that the mud had grown more troublesome, and it was beginning to rain. From about 6 o'clock we were standing by, waiting to relieve No. 1 Company in the front line. Our two days in reserve had been very comfortable, though a bit tedious. One was able, however, to pass the time by reading in one's dug-out.

At 8 o'clock, in rain, which was now pouring down quite fast, we started for the front line. There we were to take over six front posts and two in support. I marshalled the posts under their guides and followed in rear of the Company. We had about half a mile to go, all above ground. The posts were scattered as in the reserve line, and Company Headquarters were in one of the support trenches, in an old German dug-out about 50 feet down, with a number of rooms at the bottom, one of which MacMahon and I shared. The chief difference which being in the front line made, was that we had to be much more vigilant by night. Either MacMahon, or I, had to be out and about for the whole of the night, going round the posts, or keeping a look-out in the direction of the Hun lines, which were about 200

yards away. Our position was just in front of the famous Bapaume-Peronne road, recognisable solely by the avenue of broken trees which marked its line. For the half of the night on which we were not on duty we were able to sleep, but duty naturally rather broke up one's rest.

Sunday, February 18th.—We could work less by day than by night in our new position, and one accordingly got a part of one's rest by day. At stand-to this morning I got my first taste of shelling. There was quite a little bombardment, and whizzbangs were sailing gaily over our heads. All were dropping some way back, but the sound was deceptive, and one never knew whether they were going to land in the trench or not. My chief sensation was, I think, excitement.

We discovered, to-day, what strangely friendly relations prevailed in our part of the line. Neither side was very securely entrenched, and the infantry on both had adopted the principle of 'Live, and let live.' Not a shot was fired on either side while we were in the line, and artillery fire was the only thing we got there. During the day we slept, or walked round the posts, it being possible to walk with comparative freedom above ground. Two artillery forward observation officers came in to lunch and tea with us.

The night was similar to the previous one, but as it started for us at stand-to, this time it was infinitely more tedious, and several times during the night I felt that trench life was the most unpleasantly

boring, muddy business I had ever run into. For now, we had had so much rain that the mud was getting deep everywhere, and it would have been exceedingly difficult making one's rounds, but for the Véry Lights so frequently thrown up on both sides. However, dawn came at last.

Monday, February 19th.—To-day was very similar to yesterday. One Coldstreamer on our left was wounded, but otherwise peace reigned again. During the afternoon, when I was going round, a hail of machine-gun bullets fell a few feet from me and my orderly, but fortunately no damage was done. Soon after 6 o'clock, the 2nd Grenadiers appeared to relieve us, and I marched back to camp with my platoon. My feet were a bit sore, and the march seemed an unconscionably long one: it must have taken between two and three hours. But at last we reached our old camp at Maurepas, and were able to eat and drink and sleep in more comfortable surroundings. I had to sleep on the floor, but that was better than a broken night's rest.

Tuesday, February 20th.—We got up late this morning, and it was a joy to wash and put on clean clothes. I had barely finished dressing when I was surprised to receive a call from Crosthwaite, late curate at Liverpool, now a chaplain in a camp near by. I had to rush away for parade after a very few words with him. Parade simply consisted of an inspection of rifles, feet, gas helmets, &c., and in the afternoon our only duty was attendance at a lecture by the Brigadier on Trench Routine, which I found

most interesting and instructive. Otherwise we had a quiet day and took it easily.

Wednesday, February 21st.—To-day we spent fairly quietly. The company did a little bayonet fighting in the morning, in which I took my platoon, and found them exceedingly ignorant of the art too. I also supervised the washing of the men's feet at the Bath House. In the afternoon MacMahon lectured the company N.C.O.'s on Trench Routine, and afterwards I addressed my platoon (No. 9) on the same subject. In the evening I wrote some letters, and after dinner played a little Bridge.

Thursday, February 22nd.—This morning I again gave instruction in bayonet fighting to some of the company. The afternoon and evening passed uneventfully. Still no post from England. We have not had one for about four days now. One or two copies of *The Times*, however, got through, and I learnt that I was gazetted Lieutenant, with a number of other officers, in last Tuesday's Gazette, but all dated back to October 18th. This evening the food shortage made itself felt! There was no bread with the rations and rather a scarcity of one or two other commodities.

Friday, February 23rd.—This morning I attended the Company's foot-washing parade, and afterwards the men did a little drill. Then we got our trench packing done, and hung about preparatory to moving into the line in the evening. We were taking over the same piece of line again, but this time No. 3 Company was in front for the first two days, and to

go into reserve for the last two. Accordingly we marched off just at 5 P.M., and after an hour and a half on the road, again picked up our guides at Priez Farm, and followed them into the trenches. The company of the 2nd Grenadiers which we relieved, had little fresh to report: the Hun was remaining amicable: in the right front company, however, they had had some casualties from his artillery fire. The Grenadiers had barely departed, when he showed a disposition to make fresh trouble with his artillery. A regular bombardment commenced soon after 8 o'clock, and we all crouched low in the trenches while shells burst over our heads, or to the right. None of our posts was actually hit. The right Company, however, got it rather hot: three men were killed and four wounded in their trenches, and Buster Brown, who was in charge of one of their advanced posts, was knocked over by a shell, which proved to be a dud and did him no harm. After half an hour the shelling ceased, and for the remainder of the night, our guns were busier than the Hun's. The C.S.M., MacMahon and I divided the night between us, my watch being from 12 to 2. I therefore got quite a lot of good sleep, both before and after my rounds. When on duty I went round all our posts, and went out into No Man's Land for half an hour with a listening patrol from No. 5 post. We heard not a thing.

Saturday, February 24th.—It was rather misty early this morning, and I was able to go round all our posts without exposing myself unduly. On our

right I went round and visited Brown in No. 1 Company's line. Later, the mist cleared, and I was able to make a careful study of No Man's Land, with a view to a further tour of it by night. The remainder of the day was without incident. At about 2 in the morning I proceeded into No Man's Land with a small patrol, and moved across our front from opposite No. 5 to No. 8 post. The ground had a frosty surface, which made going easy. The trip was entirely uneventful, and we returned through our own wire.

Sunday, February 25th.—An eventful day this. I spent a quiet morning resting, and passed the afternoon mainly in our post 7, with various artillery F.O. officers, studying the lie of the land in and beyond St. Pierre Vaast Wood. It was a perfect spring day with excellent visibility, and our artillery were mashing up the enemy's wire to our left with great precision for some hours on end. Several of the artillery officers then came in to tea. At 5.30 we 'stood-to,' and precisely at 5.45 the Hun started to give us something back for his shelling in the afternoon. For half an hour he bombarded us intensely. We crouched down in the trench, and heard the shells whizzing over our heads with barely a break. Fortunately, all burst just beyond us—some not more than five yards from the trench—save a few which fell in the road in front. It was a nasty period. I didn't feel frightened so much as annoyed at the thought that any one of his blasted shells might very well put the lid on me, and it would be

an irritating way to finish. Anyhow, whatever my feelings, I was extremely thankful to see the end of my first really severe bombardment. When he finished, our guns took up the story, and didn't give him much rest for the whole of the night. We were due to be relieved this evening, but the relief was postponed until late, and as we sat waiting for instructions at 8.30 P.M., we received a bombshell in the shape of an operation order. Its effect was that the Germans were expected to retire almost at once to a line east of Cambrai, and might even have evacuated the trenches opposite to us already. Each Company was to send out an officer's patrol to ascertain whether his trenches were held, and, if not, we were to occupy them, and then advance through the wood. It was altogether a startling business, and as our patrol (one N.C.O. and six men under myself) was due to start at 9, I had to bustle. It sounded as though we should have some ticklish and exciting work ahead. Our departure was delayed owing to a misunderstanding on the part of three bombers, who failed to turn up at the required rendezvous, and when we did start, the Hun was on the alert. We advanced from No. 10 post to within a short distance of his wire, and then lay down. He was firing a lot of Véry Lights, and must have spotted us there, for just as I was preparing to crawl forward alone to investigate, my sergeant drew my attention to a number of Germans coming round above ground on our left, with the evident intention of cutting us off. Clearly then,

if he was prepared to take the offensive, he had not evacuated the line, and I and my party beat a hasty retreat towards our own wire. As I was now convinced that there would be no question of occupying his line, I sent home the bulk of my patrol, proceeding south with the sergeant and one man to reconnoitre further. But the Hun was too much for us with his lights. I don't think he ever lost us, and after we had lain for a short time in another position opposite his wire farther south, he started to snipe us. A bullet, indeed, fell just between me and Hegarty (the man I had with me). We sheered off still farther south, and this time it was a bomb, which burst a short way in front of us. This was enough. We returned home through our own wire, able to report that the Hun was certainly holding his line in force. It was a most exhilarating business, and it excited and thrilled me tremendously. Fortunately, we seemed to have done successfully what was expected of us. Everyone seemed pleased with our work, and I heard the next day that the Brigadier was exceedingly pleased with the work of both my patrol and the one from No. 1 Company. It having been established that the enemy had not retired opposite us, we were relieved at 1.30, and withdrew to the reserve line. I got to bed from 3.30 to 5.30, very glad of a rest and covered all over with the mud through which I had had to crawl in No Man's Land.

I might state here, as it concerns this night's adventures, that on the following morning the Commanding Officer (Major Alexander) told me the

Brigadier was exceedingly pleased with the work we had done and the report I had sent in. He asked me whether I had been out before (to which question I naturally gave a negative reply), and said I had done very good work and shown myself most enterprising. From no sense of false modesty, but in all sincerity, I record here my view that, somehow or other, the 'powers that be' have obtained an exaggerated idea of what we did, for sure I am that we couldn't possibly have done less, and that there was nothing especially praiseworthy about our work. However, what matter? I am very glad to have got a good name so soon out here, and it is a lucky chance to have had an opportunity of getting one.

Monday, February 26th.—I was glad of a quiet day to-day in the reserve line. I got some sleep in the morning, and simply spent the day messing about the reserve line. There were more rumours of the pending German withdrawal, and news of successes farther north. A small raid was projected on our front for to-night, but did not eventualise. Maxwell came in to dinner with us, and I retired early to bed and slept until stand-to in the morning.

Tuesday, February 27th.—Again a quiet day. I had a working party of fifty men to dig at a support trench, but was driven off by the Hun's shells at the first attempt (about 1 P.M.), so had to go home and wait till dark to carry on with it. During the afternoon all our Corps Artillery bombarded the German line, and I was rather nervous that the Germans

would reply in the evening and just catch us at work. My responsibility for fifty men made this a worrying prospect. However, the Germans remained quiet, and in the evening we were relieved by the 3rd Grenadiers, and trudged wearily home to Maurepas. One feels very tired during the last few miles.

Now for a few reflections, based on my eight days' experience of trench life. Firstly, I have grave doubts as to the quality of both our N.C.O.'s and men. They are mainly quite young soldiers, and though I am sure they would be brave enough in a scrap, I doubt whether they would be really resourceful or quick-witted. Next, as to trench-life: when out of the trenches, one feels quite kindly disposed towards them, and really they are not so bad when one is in them, except when the German is shelling. Then they are not nice. But it is a wearing time, partly because one's rest is so spasmodic, and one could not easily stand it for more than four days.

Wednesday, February 28th.—We had to be up in good time this morning, as we were moving down to Billon Camp (near the Plateau Station), our brigade being now in Divisional Reserve. It was a march of five miles, and on the way I made the acquaintance of our C.O. (Colonel M'Calmont, M.P.), who came up and chatted to me in a very friendly manner, and told me he had heard I had made an excellent start with patrol work. At Billon we were in large huts divided into cubicles—quite comfortable-looking places, with separate messing huts with Company officers and H.Q. We found some letters and parcels

awaiting us there, and in the afternoon, after a foot inspection, went to listen to a concert given by a concert party on tour—a good show. On my return I learned that I was for a Lewis Gun Course at Le Touquet (near Étaples) assembling the following day, so I was not to enjoy the comfort of Billon for long.

Thursday, March 1st.—I had to get up at 4 o'clock this morning, and after a hurried breakfast, drive in the Mess cart, with my servant and kit, the 18 kilometres which separated us from Méricourt Station, where I had to catch the 8 A.M. train for Amiens. I found there a Grenadier officer—Dashwood—on the same errand, and we travelled to Amiens together. There I had a little more *déjeuner*, and met Redfern, late of the Queen's, now R.F.C., and had a chat with him. Then Dashwood and I strolled round the town, and made a few purchases, and had a look at the Cathedral. The west end (from without) I liked, and some of the glass, but on the whole I was disappointed, and thought the interior rather spoiled by some of the rather ornate decorations, altar-pieces, &c. A good lunch at the Railway Buffet. Then we proceeded by passenger train to Étaples, and I slept for the greater part of the journey. From Étaples by tram, and on foot to the Camp at Le Touquet, just on the edge of the golf-course, a very pretty spot, with sand-hills and pine-woods all about. We had a large hut for Mess, but slept in tents: mine I shared with an ensign called Smythe, of the Scots Guards. We were a day early for the Course,

and so the Mess was very empty. To bed soon after dinner (not a bad one).

Friday, March 2nd.—I woke up this morning feeling thoroughly refreshed. Although I was sleeping on the floor, I had enjoyed a most peaceful and comfortable night, and it was delightful when one woke up to hear none of that noise of guns which I had grown in a very short time to dislike. As we had arrived a day early for the Course, we had a complete day's holiday to-day, and after breakfast in bed, we dressed at our leisure, and then Dashwood, Smythe, Bridgeman (of the Household Battalion) and I, went off for the day. We strolled across the sand-hills and then along the sands to Paris-Plage. There we had hot baths, and tried to get our hair cut. Then we took the tram to Étapes, and had an excellent (and very cheap) lunch at the Hôtel des Voyageurs opposite the station. Then we scattered, and did a little shopping, and met for tea at the Officers' Club, after which we walked back to camp in plenty of time for dinner. The messing at the camp was good. Early to bed.

Saturday, March 3rd.—To-day the Course started, and they kept us pretty hard at it all morning and afternoon. However, it was all interesting and the instruction good. In the afternoon I was told that I was to attend the six-day, not the fourteen-day, Course; so, alas! my stay here is to be a short one. After tea we went for a stroll round by Le Touquet and Paris-Plage.

Sunday, March 4th.—To-day, we worked during

the morning, but had the afternoon off. The four of us walked into Paris-Plage, and I had my hair cut. We took the tram from there to Étaples and had tea at the Club. After tea I read most of Wells' 'Invisible Man.' Then we moved on to the Hôtel des Voyageurs, where we had an excellent dinner, and fortunately found a cab to take us back to camp.

Monday, March 5th.—I had a slight rash on my chest to-day, and attended sick parade to have it diagnosed. Fortunately, it proved to be nothing more serious than a trench rash, called, I think, Pityriasis. Work as usual in the morning and afternoon—lectures and handling of the gun. In the evening I started to read May Sinclair's 'Tasker Jevons,' and was much engrossed by it.

Tuesday, March 6th.—To-day was very like yesterday, except that we went to the range in the morning, and each of us fired about forty rounds from the gun. At 6 o'clock there was an admirable concert at the Y.M.C.A. Hut, among the performers being the Duchess of Westminster.

Wednesday, March 7th.—Apart from the fact that each day was slightly colder than the last, each day on this Course very closely resembled its predecessor. This morning we went out for a small tactical scheme to practise the placing of Lewis and machine guns. In the evening the four of us walked in to Paris-Plage, with the idea of getting baths there. However, owing to a shortage of coal, the baths were—alas!—closed. So we had to sit

in the Continental Hotel and wait for the dinner hour. We dined there, and a very good dinner they gave us. Then fortunately we found a taxi, which took us back to camp.

Thursday, March 8th.—To-day was the last of the Course, and during the morning officers of a great number of divisions received orders to leave here at 5 o'clock the next morning. However, the Guards' Division, together with most divisions of the 4th Army, were not included in this number, and it seemed likely that we should have another day here, before they found train accommodation for us. After tea, Bridgeman, Smythe and I had what they called Russian baths in the camp. They steamed us until it was too hot to bear, and then we had hot showers: altogether a most satisfying process. Then refreshed, we three and Dashwood proceeded into Étapes, and after a brief visit to the Officers' Club, dined at the Hôtel des Voyageurs. We were then fortunate enough to get a lift in a French Red Cross motor back to camp.

Friday, March 9th.—This morning I arose a little later than usual. At 10.30 we got our movement orders, and I found I had to report at Étapes Station at 7 the next morning. I stayed in camp for the morning, and finished reading 'Tasker Jevons': a very enjoyable book, and the title-part does no discredit to the family name!¹ After lunch I proceeded through the snow into Étapes, fortunately getting a lift in a British Red Cross

¹ Jevons—the maiden-name of Lieut. Shears' mother.

motor for part of the way. There I took a room for the night at the Hôtel des Voyageurs, and then proceeded to the Club, where I had tea, finished reading Wells' 'Invisible Man,' and wrote some letters. I dined there in company with Smythe, and then repaired to bed in the hotel.

Saturday, March 10th.—I was up early this morning, and got a seat in a troop train proceeding up to the 4th Army. Between 8 and 9 we started, and after the usual rather halting journey, reached Le Plateau Station at about 5 o'clock. I read the 'Ordeal of Richard Feverel' during most of the journey, and kept myself going with two brews of cocoa on my Tommy's Cooker. I found the Battalion in Billon Camp in the same quarters in which I had left them. The only change was the departure of M'Calmont to command a brigade, and his replacement by Alexander.

Sunday, March 11th.—This morning I got up late, but just in time to attend the Church of England service in the camp, followed by Holy Communion. It was a beautiful day, warm and sunny, and one could almost smell the spring coming. I did little during the day beyond writing letters, &c., and retired early to bed.

Monday, March 12th.—In the morning I put some of the company Lewis-gunners through their firing, and then looked after my packing, &c., as we were moving up the line to-day. We paraded at 4 o'clock, and marched viâ Maurepas to Combles, which we reached at about 8. There No. 3 Company was

quartered for the night, the other companies being at Frégicourt and Haire Wood. We were in brigade reserve, our brigade being in process of taking over the Saillisel Sector from the 2nd brigade, the Division having recently taken over a two-brigade frontage. The men were very cramped in shelters by the side of the road, but the Company Headquarters was in a well-constructed and roomy dug-out, and there were separate bedrooms for MacMahon, Moodie, and myself. It was Moodie's birthday, and he had supplied champagne, which was a welcome restorative at the end of our long march. After seeing the rum issued to the men, we retired to bed. We had only trench kits up here, so could not undress; with this limitation I passed a very comfortable night.

Tuesday, March 13th.—We passed the day quietly in Combles. I had to get up fairly early to supervise the washing of the men's feet. Then I roamed round Combles. It is quite a good-sized hamlet, yet with hardly one brick standing on another. I don't know that I have ever seen destruction on so wholesale a scale (since writing the last words, I have inspected the village of Saillisel, and in comparison with its condition, Combles is a flourishing town). In the afternoon I read through Buchan's 'Power House,' and was exceedingly thrilled by it. At about 6.30 we paraded, and marched up to the trenches (Saillisel Sector). No. 3 Company was in right support, with Company Headquarters and two platoons back near Battalion Headquarters, and

myself, with Nos. 9 and 10 Platoons, forward half-way to the front line in Bettye Trench, a small piece of trench with one large and deep dug-out, into which we all crowded. I had no private apartment or furniture—simply floor-space to lie on, with blankets hung round. When we had settled in, I went back to Company Headquarters for dinner, but as it was reported to be unsafe to roam about in daylight, it was clear that I should have to have my other meals in my own trench. Later in the night I went up with my Platoon Sergeant and Orderly, to visit the Right Front Company line. It was raining rather hard, and the track was very broken and sloppy. However, on our return journey, at any rate, the enemy's shelling entirely monopolised our attention—he very nearly got us more than once—and we barely noticed other unpleasantnesses. The front line, like the one we had held at St. Pierre Vaast, consisted solely of small detached posts, and I began to realise now, that at any rate on this part of the front, the old style of trench warfare had given place to something approximating slightly to the old open warfare, in which positions were held by a line of outpost groups: movement was too rapid for the old way. Our front line ran through, and on to the right of the village of Saillisel. During the remainder of the night I got a little sleep.

Wednesday, March 14th.—To-day passed quietly enough. It was rather wet, and work on the trench consequently a bit spasmodic. My meals were primitive, but eatable. The chief defect of the quarters was the insufferable atmosphere at the hours when

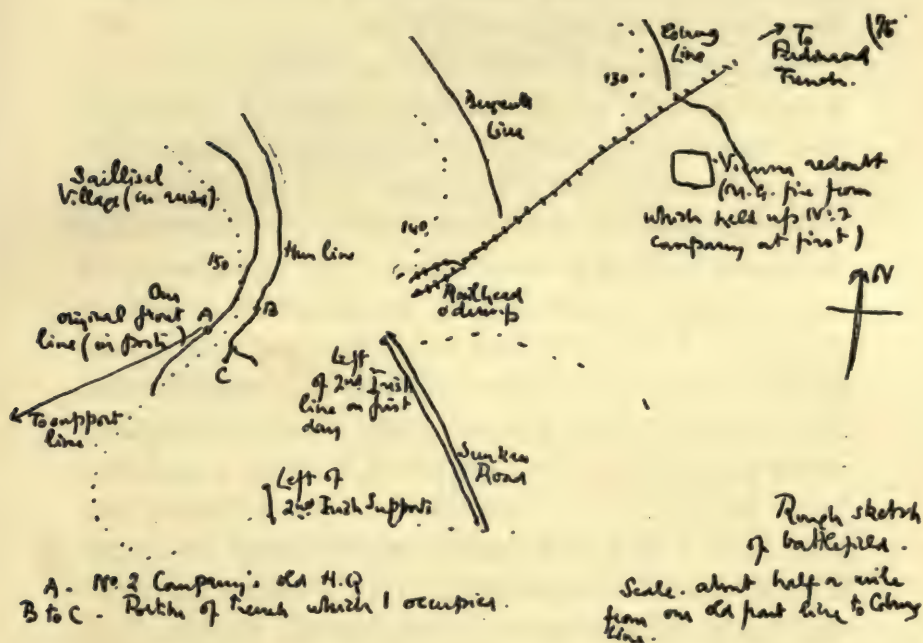
the fifty odd men living there were engaged in cooking their meals on *wood* fires inside: breathing was barely possible. When I got down to Company Headquarters in the evening, I learned that the Hun was believed to be retiring this night from his positions opposite us: the old story again, but this time apparently the evidence was stronger; at any rate it proved to be more reliable, for as the night went on, we heard that the patrols, which the front companies were sending out, found the German line very lightly held, while our 2nd Battalion, in the 2nd Brigade on our right, was making the same discovery, while the battalion in our old line in St. Pierre Vaast Wood was reported to have entered the German front and support lines. But, in spite of these excitements, there was nothing for us in the support line to do, but work at the trench or sleep.

Thursday, March 15th. — We heard nothing definite about the happenings in front, until the middle of the morning, when MacMahon came round and told me that the companies in front were going to occupy the German front line, and I was to be ready to take over the right front company's posts, so soon as Rodakowski left them. I accordingly sent forward two runners to bring me back news so soon as this took place. The Hun had evidently not retired his artillery, for he was shelling all in front with great intensity; and as, after waiting half an hour, we saw nothing of our runners, I sent forward two more. In half an hour these were back, with the news that our first runners had been killed by

a shell which had burst on top of the right front Company Headquarters, killing in all four or five men, and wounding Major Young and one man, both seriously. They did not seem to know whether or no the Company had moved forward, but reported heavy shelling and apparent confusion in front. I saw that I should have to go forward myself to see how matters really stood, and having got a volunteer, a man called Dean, to accompany me, made my way up to No. 2 Company's Headquarters. There I found the casualties of an hour ago, and one or two live men who could give me no clear news of their Company. We accordingly went forward after the Company, and in about 40 yards came into the German front trench. Then a little way to the left I found Pokey Law (O.C. No. 4 Company) and some of his Company. They were having a pretty nasty time from the Hun's shells, and were held up there for the time. Further along I came to Harvey and some of No. 2 Company, but he could not tell me where 'Kowski or the rest of the Company were: in fact the situation was pretty confused. I was still hunting, when I met a runner with a message from 'Kowski to O.C. Advance Troops, stating that he was isolated, with about fifty men, near the railhead by the German support line, and held there by machine-gun fire. This looked bad, and it was clear that No. 2's old posts had long been vacant and ready for us to move forward to. I took a copy of the message, as I thought it might interest our Battalion Headquarters, and hurried back with

my orderly to my old post, and pleased I was to reach it without meeting a Hun shell. I then hurried back to Company Headquarters, told them all I knew, so that they could pass it on to Battalion Headquarters, and arranged to take my platoon forward and occupy a few of No. 2's vacant posts, and get in touch with whoever were on my two flanks. So No. 9 and I proceeded, with all our goods and chattels, up the duckboards, with ten minutes' interval between sections. We all arrived safely, and I disposed them in four posts, and went across to the German line, where I had met Law an hour ago. This time I found 'Kowski with him, and learned that the machine-gun fire had ceased, and he had been able to occupy the Beyreuth Trench line which ran to the left of the railhead, and was pushing on to the Coburg line ahead. Baggallay, with No. 1 Company, was occupying the left of the support line, and I next went on to make connection with him. I found that he was extending a little to the right, and that I was to push farther to the right to make room for him. I then returned to my platoon, and found that Sergeant Kane had been exploring a piece of German trench on the right front of our line. He had ventured into all the dug-outs there, and pronounced them safe from booby traps. I accordingly moved my platoon in there. It was a good deep trench (about 8 feet down), with dug-out accommodation for half a company, and the dug-outs were clean and comfortable. It was only 25 yards from our old front line, and as it was

more or less in the nature of a saphead in the air, I can't think how the Hun can have stuck to it for so long. Its only defect was its exceedingly muddy bottom. (Plan below shows position.) I had



sent a man out to ascertain the position of the 2nd Irish, and he reported their positions as shown in plan: they had apparently not succeeded in getting forward so far as our front line. It was now almost dark, and there was little more for us to do to-day. We had some scratch rations, and were able to make something of a meal. Fortunately we had shell-proof dug-outs for the whole platoon, as the Hun, if anything, increased the intensity of his artillery fire

during the night; so, except for the sentries, my men were not in danger. During the night two days' rations came up from the support line. I did not sleep much, as I was a bit on edge after the day's excitement, and the shelling was so loud and continuous that it gave one little rest.

Friday, March 16th.—This morning there was a heavy mist, which entirely obscured the view, and the German artillery had ceased firing. Life was therefore much pleasanter. The Brigade Major ('Becky' Smith) was round fairly early, and wanted to know the way up to our front companies. I accordingly escorted him to the railhead, where we found the left of the 2nd Irish line, and then on to the Beyreuth line. There we found Law and 'Kowski, and learned that our patrols, under Budd and Bagenal, were well forward by Ferdinand Trench, which had been laid down as the limit of our advance, and that Nos. 2 and 4 Companies were dug in on the Coburg and Beyreuth lines. Everything was therefore fairly satisfactory with us, though the 2nd Irish had not got on so well on the right. At the same time I heard that we were in possession of the whole of St. Pierre Vaast Wood further south. After breakfast, I had hardly started the men to work on improving the trench, when the Hun began shelling again with renewed vigour and extreme accuracy. I therefore got the men back into their dug-outs, only keeping a sentry out. Not long after, the Hun dropped a shell right into the trench, just where the sentry was standing, and killed him instantaneously.

It was right at the mouth of my dug-out, and shook us all up a bit. The poor man was quite an elderly married man, and much respected. I was very upset about him. The shelling went on without intermission until about 7 in the evening, and after the hit at the mouth of my dug-out, I felt extremely cowardly under it. I think a long stop in a deep dug-out is most damaging to one's *morale*, for whether the shells are falling near your trench or some way off, they always sound as if they were practically on top of you. However, in the circumstances, dug-outs were the best places to be in. At about 7 o'clock the Hun stopped shelling, and that was the last serious trouble we had from him. The whole action had cost us in casualties about fifteen killed, and forty wounded (most of them slightly), and I think we were lucky in this, for the shelling had been exceedingly heavy. Indeed, I think that a retirement of the kind the Hun was executing is, under modern conditions, fairly easy. All he has to do is to withdraw his infantry by night, and hold up the pursuit by heavy artillery barrages at a long range, and machine-gun fire for about twenty-four hours, and then take back his guns. This is what he did, and as we could not possibly push our attack, owing to the impossibility of bringing up our guns, we had simply to follow slowly, and wait on his movements. Anyhow, to-night was a quiet one, and we all got some good rest.

Saturday, March 17th.—It was hot and sunny to-day. The Hun appeared to have retreated off

the map; and we were very happy. We basked on the parapet and enjoyed the war. There was one contretemps during the morning, and there might have been more, for some men digging in my trench, as a result of a disobedience to orders, exploded three German bombs, and two men were wounded—only slightly. Then, suddenly from the blue, three shells landed almost in our trench, and made us jump a bit. In the afternoon I went for a good walk through Saillisel, and on to the Beyreuth line. From there we were able to see all the villages round—Rocquigny, Mesnil, Bys, and Le Transloy—and nowhere a sign of the Hun. In fact he appeared to have retired on a very broad front, and we heard that our troops had entered Bapaume early this morning. It looked as though the Germans were going straight back to the fabled Hindenburg line. We were tremendously exhilarated, and quite sorry to be relieved by the 2nd Grenadiers in the evening. We marched back to our old quarters at Maurepas, and enjoyed a good dinner. It had been a most interesting tour of duty, and as much as anything I was glad to have got to know (and appreciate) my own platoon: they are a very good lot of men.

Sunday, March 18th.—We got up very late to-day, and did nothing all day.

Monday, March 19th.—Until the retirement of the Huns had actually taken place, I never realised what a tremendous amount would have to be done on our side before we could follow them up effectively.

There was a belt of country three or four miles wide with literally no communications, and the work of construction involved was colossal. This morning it started for us. We marched out to the Bapaume road, near Saily-Saillisel, and started to clear the surface. The work cheered everybody tremendously; that we should now be working, packed as thick as flies, on a spot that had been one of the hottest on earth, made one positively laugh with joy. In places the road cleared easily. There were some six inches of mud and debris to scrape off, and then we came to the old surface unimpaired. Elsewhere shells had made large holes, and the job of filling these in was a longer one. However, some artillery was due to pass along this afternoon, and it was made clear enough for them. However, there was still a great deal of work to be done before it could take motor traffic. After lunch Moodie and I wandered round our own and the Hun's lines, and inspected their miserable and battered condition. At 3 o'clock we started off, and marched back to Maurepas. After tea we managed to get hot showers in the bath-house attached to the camp.

Tuesday, March 20th.—It was raining hard this morning, and blowing with an icy blast, and at first it looked as though work on roads would be impossible. However, it cleared, and we marched out again to the same spot. This time we were laying the duck-board track out to Le Mesnil, where our front line had stopped for the present. When work was over we returned to Combles, and established

ourselves there for the night in the snug quarters we had occupied a week before.

Wednesday, March 21st.—We set off at about the usual hour this morning. There was no rest for the men now, as the quantity of work to be done was so immense. To-day we worked on a mule track through Saillisel village. In places we were able to find and clear an old road, but elsewhere shells had utterly destroyed it, and a new track had to be constructed out of the bricks from the ruined houses of the village. At present mules were doing all the transport to the front line, and improved tracks for them were an urgent need. During the day I went forward to Ferdinand Trench, which had been the limit of our Battalion's advance on the 17th, and had a look at the country there. Even so far back as this, at their fourth line, the Germans had wire, some 10 feet wide, extending without a break all across their front, and a continuous line of trenches too. They are infinitely more thorough than we are, and if thoroughness and skill in the field were the only criteria, deserve to win the war every time. After work was over we came into the support line for the night. Company Headquarters was at Bettye Trench, and I slept in the same German dug-out I had occupied before—but this time my sleep was sounder and less disturbed.

Thursday, March 22nd.—The men spent the morning on salvage work—collecting stores and débris from the old trenches into dumps—and after lunch we made ready to relieve the 2nd Coldstream

in the front line. We marched up, partly by duck-boards and partly across country, to just by Le Mesnil, where was the Company Headquarters of the Company we were to relieve. It was in an old sunken road, which the Germans had fortified, and which was full of dug-outs, all but one of which had been blown up by them before they evacuated the line. MacMahon was consequently rather afraid of traps in the one remaining—which was a very large one, and would have held two companies—and spent some time cutting every wire he could see. Fortunately no trap revealed itself. We were holding here an outpost line quite in the ancient infantry training fashion, with picquets, and sentry-groups, and all the rest of the paraphernalia. I was in charge of one of our picquets about half a mile from Company Headquarters, and had two sentry-groups thrown out another half mile, occupying an old German trench (one of many lines we found even back here—all impenetrably wired). We sent round the line and inspected it just before dusk (incidentally in a snow-storm), and as soon as it was dark carried out the relief. We had a slit in the earth to occupy at my picquet, with corrugated iron over the top in places to form shelters, and exceedingly cold ones they were. I spent a part of the night going round posts, finding picquets on my flanks, &c., and got a little sleep towards morning. We had cavalry out in front of us, so the risk of attack was infinitesimal.

Friday, March 23rd.—We were supposed not to

show ourselves more than was necessary by day, so stuck pretty tight to our trenches. However, I got leave from MacMahon to explore a little of the surrounding country in the afternoon, and went forward with my orderly to a cavalry post ahead, and then up to the crest of the hill overlooking the next valley. From there, I could see a wide stretch of country, including the line of trenches, which from the direction from which Véry Lights had been thrown up last night, I believed the Huns to be holding lightly. However, there was hardly a sign of life, and I only saw two groups of about four men each in the whole country. Then I went on to look at the village of Étricourt. It had evidently been used by the Germans for billets up to their retirement, but before leaving it they had systematically burned every room in every house, so that now it presented a rather cheerless spectacle. Another demonstration of German thoroughness was provided in the valley, where a railway had once run: each rail had been severed by explosive at intervals of about five yards, so as to render it utterly useless to us. When I got back to my picquet, I found the relief just arrived: it was from the 12th K.R.R. (20th Division), for our Division was now going out of the line to make roads, and its sector being taken over by the 20th and 8th Divisions. Just when a more interesting form of warfare had commenced, it was hard luck to be put out of it. However, no doubt the road-making is the most important job at the moment, and our men work so well that they have been put

on to that. We marched back to Combles, where the whole Battalion was quartered, this time in a camp just west of the village. All the officers were in one large and deep dug-out, with mess-rooms in small tin sheds. The dug-out was comfortable, but a little airless.

Saturday, March 24th.—We started our life of fatigues this morning. We were not called until about 9.30, and then learned that we had to be on parade at 11.15. We marched out to the old Bapaume road, and carried on with work on its surface—a dull job for us officers. We were back by 6, and then I had to take company foot washing. To-night we lost an hour, as summer time came in.

Sunday, March 25th.—To-day we spent like yesterday, save that we worked this time on the Frégicourt road, just beyond what was once Frégicourt. We were given this sector for the company to work on daily, and Moodie and I found an old shelter in which to lunch, and managed to be fairly comfortable. Early to bed, and in bed I started to read a new novel I had just got from home—‘Sonia,’ by Stephen McKenna.

Monday, March 26th.—To-day it rained and snowed intermittently, and work was consequently a lot less pleasant. Otherwise there is nothing to record.

Tuesday, March 27th.—Work was just the same to-day, but I came back early in the afternoon, as I became picquet officer at 4 P.M., and had to mount the guard.

Wednesday, March 28th.—To-day I was up in good time, as I had to supervise the Company bathing itself at Maurepas. We walked there by the short route down the valley, and there the men had shower baths and a change of clothing, which they badly needed. As I was picquet officer, I did not go out to Frégicourt, but stayed in camp, and did some reading, both at the 'Round Table' and 'Sonia.'

Thursday, March 29th.—It was a miserably wet day, but we had to go out to work as usual, and the men got pretty thoroughly soaked.

Friday, March 30th.—The weather was slightly better to-day, but not very fine. Work as usual. In the evening I had a hot bath, which is such a luxury, it is worth recording.

Saturday, March 31st.—To-day passed like yesterday, with the usual storm in the evening, which did me little harm owing to the efficacy of my Aquascutum, but which soaked the men through as usual. In the evening we learned that the Division was shortly to move back south-west of Amiens for really hard training by platoons, which should do us a lot of good. I only wish they would hurry up the move, as everyone is getting very tired of road-making. However, our advance is continuing so steadily, that there must be lots of roads to make. I must say I envied the 20th Division, who are making the advance, but I suppose they didn't want to risk us in operations which might involve a big smash, and which other people could do just as well; but they must be having great fun.

Sunday, April 1st.—This morning we went to a short Church of England service, and then off to fatigue as usual. All available officers went down to Grove Town for the funeral of Major Young, who died yesterday of his wounds; very terrible for his poor wife. I had to take the company out and couldn't manage to get to it. The usual storm in the evening.

Monday, April 2nd.—To-day we were put to work on the Bapaume road, on the north side of Sailly-Saillisel. It was interesting to have a change. There was a really heavy snow-storm in the evening, in the teeth of which we had to march home.

Tuesday, April 3rd.—To-day was fine, for a welcome change. We worked again on the same piece of road.

Wednesday, April 4th.—To-day I was picquet officer in waiting, and therefore exempt from fatigue; nor was I sorry, for it was a worse day than most. I got a very good parcel from home during the morning, containing, amongst other things, a chicken in aspic: a most opportune arrival, as the Commanding Officer was coming to dine with us that very night. I read 'Lady Connie' during part of the day. In the evening the C.O. came to dinner, and Corporal Cairns dished up a first-class seven-course dinner for him. He made a most pleasant guest.

Thursday, April 5th.—It was beautifully fine to-day, and again I remained in camp as picquet officer. A number of 2nd Irish officers, including my old friend Synge, looked in during the morning,

and some of them stayed to lunch. Otherwise the day passed uneventfully. We retired early to bed, as we were moving from Combles early the next day.

Friday, April 6th.—At 9 we marched out of Combles, and by the duck-board track viâ Haire Wood and Sailly-Saillisel to Le Transloy. Beyond Le Transloy we stopped and prepared to pitch a camp there. After considerable waiting, the canvas arrived, and was pitched there, just before the rain started to fall. Nos. 3 and 4 Company Officers had an old kitchen for mess-room, with the advantage of a fireplace and walls of a sort, and the disadvantage that the fire smoked without intermission, and that the ceiling leaked badly: however, on the whole, it was perhaps better than a marquee. We slept in bell-tents, and mine I was glad to share with Bagenal. All the evening the rain fell torrentially.

Saturday, April 7th.—We marched out to fatigue as usual, only a lot earlier, to find that the R.E. were thoroughly disorganised, and had no work for us to do. We accordingly came home again, and spent the day laying brick paths in the camp.

Sunday, April 8th.—To-day the R.E. had a job for us on the track for a broad-gauge railway to Rocquigny. I felt rather unwell during the morning, and reported sick when we got back; and was sent to bed with a temperature of 103.6° . Fortunately it was a perfect spring day, and I was able to lie and admire it with the tent door wide open, and my temperature falling fast.

Monday, April 9th.—To-day was a foul day, snowing most of the time, and as a consequence my temperature rose towards evening. I finished reading 'Lady Connie,' which I had quite enjoyed, though I did not think it up to the writer's best form.

Tuesday, April 10th.—My temperature was higher again to-day, and the M.O. accordingly decided to send me off to hospital. I therefore got up and dressed, and after waiting for some hours, the ambulance arrived, and drove me down, in company with Prince Imaretinski, of the Grenadiers, just to the Field Ambulance, where I was welcomed by none other than Murphy, whose acquaintance I had made at New Brighton last December with Father. We were sent on from there to the Corps Rest Station at Grove Town, where our names and complaints were registered, and we were then returned along the same road to the 48th Casualty Clearing Station, quite near Bray. The Officers' Ward there we found to be a large, well-heated hut, with comfortable spring beds and sheets, and all the other luxuries of civilisation. After a little food I retired to bed. They said my temperature was normal—a strange result of my long journey.

Wednesday, April 11th.—My temperature was over 103° all day, and I did little but sleep. In the evening I got up a good perspiration, which, during the night, took my temperature right down to normal.

Thursday, April 12th.—My temperature was

quite normal this morning, and I read Ian Hay's 'Happy-Go-Lucky' during the day. The food of the hospital was good, and everything most comfortable. In the evening my temperature was just a little up.

Friday, April 13th.—To-day my temperature remained normal. I read Mason's 'Four Feathers,' and enjoyed it.

Saturday, April 14th.—To-day I read through Vachell's 'Rivers of Jordan,' and a shocker by Le Queux. I was allowed to get up for an hour or two in the afternoon, and felt pretty flabby.

Sunday, April 15th.—I got up to-day after the Doctor had gone his rounds, and stayed up until 6 P.M., when I had a hot bath and returned to bed. I read Belloc's 'Girondin.'

Monday, April 16th.—This morning I was allowed out for a walk, and went up with Imaretinski towards Billon Camp, where I was astonished to find my own Battalion, which had come down there the previous day, and was starting on a fortnight's hard training. I visited the Mess, and collected one or two letters. Unfortunately, others had been forwarded to me here, and heaven knows when they will arrive. When I got back here after my two-mile walk, I felt I had had enough exercise for the day, and did not go out again.

Tuesday, April 17th.—It was a filthy day to-day—cold and wet—and a proper walk was out of the question. I wrote some letters and read some of the 'Round Table,' and after tea managed to get out for an hour. I went for a walk round the village

of Bray, which has always been behind our line, and has suffered surprisingly little from shell-fire in the past. The church and many of the houses were intact, and a number of the villagers have never left their homes.

Wednesday, April 18th.—To-day was thoroughly wet and unpleasant, and I could hardly get out of doors at all. The ward got very full during the morning, but a hospital train went out in the afternoon, taking the majority of the patients, and relieving the pressure a lot.

Thursday, April 19th.—It was finer to-day, and after the Doctor's rounds I started out for a good walk. However, I found myself astonishingly weak : after ten minutes' walking I felt tired, and an hour of it quite finished me off. In the afternoon I read an interesting book of Anthony Hope's—' Tristram of Blent.'

Friday, April 20th.—I found I was no stronger to-day. An hour's walk was all I could manage in the morning. True, it was a lot hotter; the fine weather seemed actually to have arrived, and that made it a bit enervating. In the afternoon I walked up to visit the Battalion at Billon, and had tea there. They are all training hard—so hard that I realised I was not yet quite strong enough to rejoin them. In the evening I read through Oscar Wilde's ' Lord Savile's Crime,' &c., and was quite amused by the stories. For the second day in succession there was no post from home : rumour had it that the Channel ports were closed temporarily.

Saturday, April 21st.—To-day was fine again, and I went for a good walk, with other convalescents, to Suzanne, nearly three miles away. It is a pretty village, and though it must have been quite near the old French front line, is in a very good state of repair. We got back just in time for lunch. In the afternoon I started to read Anthony Hope's 'A Young Man's Year'—a pleasant story; and after tea called on Tallents of the 2nd Battalion, who was in No. 5 C.C.S. next door. I also read 'Daddy Long Legs' to-day.

Sunday, April 22nd.—This morning the question of our evacuation was discussed, and it was decided that I should go on Tuesday. I feel almost set up again now. I went for a walk down the valley of the Somme with Tallents, and had an interesting talk with him about affairs in general. In the afternoon I read, and in the evening walked round by Bray and bought a paper. After dinner I finished 'A Young Man's Year,' and my servant brought me a good mail from home.

Monday, April 23rd.—I had another pleasant walk with Tallents this morning, down the Somme valley. Otherwise the day was uneventful. I read a bunch of *Times*, which had arrived from home during the afternoon, and after tea took my daily walk into Bray. In the evening I played Bridge.

Tuesday, April 24th.—I found it a bit of a wrench deciding to tear myself away from the hospital to-day (for in effect I had to make the decision myself,

as the M.O. was in no hurry to shift me); but I did not feel as if I was getting much fitter where I was, and therefore made up my mind that the best thing was to get back to work at once. I therefore sent my kit off to Billon Camp first thing in the morning, and thus crossed the Rubicon. During the morning I went for my usual walk with Tallents, and after lunch I took my leave of the hospital and walked up to the camp. It was a hutment camp, which we shared with some Coldstreamers, but quite roomy and comfortable. I found myself picquet officer almost as soon as I arrived in camp, but the duties were not arduous.

Wednesday, April 25th.—I was excused the run before breakfast, but was otherwise doing my full duties. Platoon training I found was in full swing, and working up for a Brigade Competition. The men were already tremendously smartened up as a result of the week's training they had done. For the first hour in the morning we did Battalion Drill, and then a tactical scheme by platoons. As the ground round here is of the same character as Salisbury Plain and in addition is honeycombed with trenches, or scratchings of some kind in the earth, it is quite ideal for training. We did miniature attacks, and I quite enjoyed it. In the afternoon we did a little section training in their various special subjects, and then attended a very boring lecture on 'Outposts,' by the Brigadier. In the evening I went to a Revue done by the 3rd Coldstreamers, 'Cinderella'—a marvellously successful performance, of which the female

impersonation was one of the most notable features : all the acting and singing was first-class.

Thursday, April 26th.—This morning, after a little Platoon Drill, we went to a Rifle Range about half a mile away, and while one Platoon fired, I took the others in a tactical scheme. The firing was very bad. My Platoon fired last, and we did not get back to the camp till 2.30. During the evening I read newspapers, &c.

Friday, April 27th.—I took my Platoon in a little squad drill on first parade, and found them exceedingly good at it. Then I took out two Platoons for a trench-to-trench attack, which they carried out quite well. In the afternoon we had to go over to the Divisional Gas School, a mile and a half away, and the Company were lectured and dosed with gas until nearly 5 o'clock. A quiet evening and early to bed.

Saturday, April 28th.—To-day was fixed for a competition between the selected platoon of each company, to decide which platoon should represent the battalion in the Brigade Competition. My platoon was to represent No. 3 Company, and I gave them a little Bayonet Fighting at the sacks before breakfast. The competition was in drill, tactics, and bayonet fighting. First came the drill, and although we were expected to come out right at the bottom, we topped the list at squad drill, and were almost equal-top at rifle drill : at platoon drill, however, we went down, as I had had no time to train the men in it. They worked wonderfully well,

and fortunately I found that I was still able to give commands on the right foot. Next we had to do a small attack. My general solution of the tactical problem was pronounced correct, but I think we lost marks by not going fast enough. After lunch was bayonet fighting, in which we did pretty well. All day, people discussed the various platoons' chances, and mine did not appear out of the running. Ultimately No. 5 Platoon (Budd's) got it, and rumour had it that mine came second. It had been great fun, and our men's conceit of themselves was enormously increased by their comparative success. If I had only not been away in hospital, I think I could have done still better with them. In the afternoon I had a delicious hot bath at the Divisional Baths, and in the evening attended the last night of the Revue. There were a number of new 'turns,' and I again enjoyed it. It has been a great success. There were people in to dinner, and I did not get to bed until fairly late.

Sunday, April 29th.—This morning I attended quite a nice Church service in the Recreation Hut at Bronfuy Farm. It is a very large barn, and was packed full of men from the Brigade, and the Grenadier Band supplied the music. The preacher was not inspiring, but the service was quite an impressive one. After it I played football for No. 9 against No. 10 Platoon. It was not a very scientific game, but we succeeded in winning by one goal to none. I felt rather done in the second half, as it was the first violent exercise I had taken since I had been sick.

I spent the afternoon reading, and in the evening there was a company concert, which I attended, and afterwards the sumptuous dinner, to which we have grown accustomed at Bronfuy, with one or two guests.

Monday, April 30th.—At breakfast to-day we got the startling news that we should probably move to Combles at noon to make railways. A hideous thought! We paraded for an hour's drill, and then stood fast awaiting further orders. When they came, they were to the effect that we were to move to Maurepas to-day, and on to Étricourt to-morrow. This was much better, as it would be taking us into clean, new country. I had to send my servant hurriedly into Bray to retrieve my washing, and we were all packed up by lunch time. Before moving off, the Battalion heard a bloodthirsty lecture, by a certain Scottish Major Campbell, on bayonet fighting—exceedingly good. Then we marched by Companies to Maurepas. I led our company on MacMahon's horse. We were in huts at Maurepas, and after rather a lively evening passed a comfortable night there.

Tuesday, May 1st.—We marched off from Maurepas at 9.45, No. 3 Company leading. At Ballet Cross Roads we halted for lunch. I was riding Mac's horse at the time, and had to chase our kitchen, which had broken down. Ultimately, however, the dinners were brought up, but as a result of the delay, we had to march for the remainder of the journey in rear of the Battalion. This part of

the route was all across country, and we reached Etricourt between 2 and 3. It is a pleasant village, as I had discovered before, and the ruined houses had by this time been, in many cases, rendered habitable. We were, however, under canvas, and our camp was in a large field on the banks of the canal—a delightful spot. As a mess, we had a small house, with quite a good mess-room, and in the garden our tents were pitched. I again shared mine with Bagenal. Altogether, we were charmed with the place, and hoped we should be left here for a bit.

Wednesday, May 2nd.—This morning Nos. 3 and 4 Companies were on fatigue from 7 A.M. to 1 P.M., working at a railway-cutting just beside the camp. We got back for lunch, and I spent a lazy afternoon lying in the sun.

Thursday, May 3rd.—To-day we were not on fatigue until the afternoon, but the morning was fairly fully occupied: first with a short before-breakfast run, and later a parade for gas-helmet drill. From 1 to 7 we worked on the railway-cutting, and then it was time for dinner and bed. I started sleeping out of doors to-night, the weather being so fine and hot. About 10.30 P.M., the hooting of many horns told us that the Huns were somewhere making a gas attack. We got our helmets ready, but soon learned that the attack was at Arras, far outside our area.

Friday, May 4th.—I took a short run this morning myself, to prepare for my bath. We had a short parade during the morning for kit inspection, gas

drill, and bombing. Thanks to drafts just arrived, my platoon now numbers nearly forty fighting men, which is a tremendous improvement. I like the look of the new men too. At 1 o'clock we went on to fatigue, but finished just before 5. After tea I had my hair cut, read the paper, &c.

Saturday, May 5th.—To-day the company received a fresh officer from home, Joyce, senior to me, so I ceased to be second in command. In the morning we had a short parade, in which my platoon did bayonet fighting, and in the afternoon we were on fatigue. To-day the expert bridgers started on the railway bridge over the canal by the camp. It took them in all four days to make the bridge, with their remarkable pile-driving machine driving piles many feet deep into the bed of the canal, and then resting the line on the top. In the evening there was a joint Irish-Coldstream concert in a chalk pit near the camp—not a bad entertainment.

Sunday, May 6th.—We were on early fatigue to-day, working on the Equancourt line, just across the canal. After lunch I went a ride on Mac's horse with Poky Law, up in the direction of the line. We passed through Dessart Wood, and just short of Gouzeaucourt Wood left our horses and went on foot to our support line, where we were lucky enough to run into an Artillery Observation Post. There we stopped some time, watching them firing on La Vacquerie, which had been raided by our people last night. We could see the Hindenburg line three miles away, the lie of the land giving it a very strong natural

position. My horse was a bit difficult to manage, and shell-holes and wire made going a bit awkward. However, it was a most interesting and pleasant ride. In the evening the Commanding Officer and Adjutant came to dinner with us.

Monday, May 7th.—Short parade in the morning, and the usual afternoon parade on the railway-cutting just across the canal. To-night the fine spell of weather broke and we had heavy rain, which continued until the middle of the next day. Our tent, which had no trench round it, was partially flooded.

Tuesday, May 8th.—It rained all morning, and we remained indoors. In the afternoon we worked on the railway to Ytres, but got back before 6. The rain had passed, and it was now quite fine again.

Wednesday, May 9th.—MacMahon went away this morning on Paris leave, and I was left in charge of the company (although Joyce, who came out about a week ago, was senior to me), because of his very small knowledge of it. This meant that I was exempt from fatigues, which was a great relief. In the morning I took my platoon on the rifle range, and found them—not good, but rather better than I had expected. In the afternoon I went for a ride with Poky, to see the company working on the Ytres line. My charge of the company had the further advantage of giving me the use of Mac's horse. After tea I took it easy outside my tent.

Thursday, May 10th.—This morning Moodie and I took the N.C.O.s of the company out for an Advance Guard Tactical Scheme. We went out in

the direction of Lechelle, and I really think spent quite a profitable morning. In the afternoon I had Company Orders and Rifle Inspection, and then lay, in a more or less nude condition, outside my tent enjoying the sun, which was stupendously hot.

Friday, May 11th.—To-day I took the Company run at 7.30, and at 9 had my orders, after which we all—officers and N.C.O.s—marched out past Manancourt for a tactical scheme under the Commanding Officer. We walked on through St. Martin's Wood, past Government Farm, to the edge of St. Pierre Vaast Wood, and admired the Boche's strong position all round there. We could see our old posts in both the St. Pierre Vaast and Saillisel Sectors, and this view of them, from a new direction, was most interesting. The work done consisted chiefly of report writing by the N.C.O.s, wherein they did not shine. Hot and weary we got back to camp for a late lunch, after which I attended C.O.'s orders, and then took my platoon on the range. I was able to give them more individual instruction, as we had lots of time, and they were distinctly better than two days ago. We had firing with the Lewis Gun, too, before dismissal, and I did not get back to Mess until after 7—not a bad twelve-hour day's work for a so-called 'idle Company Commander.'

Saturday, May 12th.—This morning I rode out before breakfast to Fins, to see the men started on their fatigue on the line up to Heudicourt. After breakfast, officers and N.C.O.s went out with the Commanding Officer, and we took our Company

N.C.O.s in report writing. To-day news reached us that we were going to move north in about a week's time—to some place near Béthune, rumour had it. Whether we are going into the line or not seems uncertain. I personally favour the view that we have been put into a mobile column, and shan't engage in any active fighting for the present, unless the Huns go back farther; hence all our training in open warfare. However, we may go into a quiet part of the line for a bit, and I quite hope we shall. A short parade for rifle inspection in the afternoon. For the rest, a lazy day.

Sunday, May 13th.—This morning I went up to the range, and watched No. 12 Platoon shooting. After lunch I played football for the Company against No. 1 Company. We beat them by 2 goals to 1, after a very strenuous game in exceedingly hot weather. In the evening I dined with 'Kowski at No. 1 and 2 Company's Mess.

Monday, May 14th.—MacMahon got back last night, so I was no longer in charge of the Company. After rifle inspection, officers of No. 2 and 4 Companies went out with Baggallay for map reading and compass work. I became picquet officer at 4 o'clock, and mounted the duties, after which I took refuge in 1 and 2's Mess from a heavy downpour of rain, and stayed for tea and a little Bridge.

To-day Joyce and I were evicted from our tent, which was wanted for the men, and moved into a hut near by.

Tuesday, May 15th.—I attended no parades

to-day, as I was on duty as picquet officer until 4 P.M. It was a miserably wet day.

Wednesday, May 16th.—This morning I had to rise early and march the Company four miles to Heudicourt for a railway fatigue, which lasted until after 2. We marched back in the rain, and it went on raining through the night. Our hut leaked badly, but we were able to move our beds out of the drips.

Thursday, May 17th.—This morning officers and N.C.O.s had a short tactical exercise under Col. Follett of the 2nd Coldstream. He dealt with various situations in a trench-to-trench attack, and was extremely sound and interesting. In the afternoon we had a short company parade. The weather was fine again to-day.

Friday, May 18th.—To-day we went out under the Commanding Officer for a demonstration of a trench-to-trench attack. In the afternoon there was a Battalion football match, and not much work done.

Saturday, May 19th.—I was in charge of the fatigue this morning, and we paraded at 7.10, and marched down to Ytres for ballasting work on the railway track. The cooker brought out the men's dinners, and work went on till 2.30—a long day which no one much appreciated. Nothing else of note during this, our last day at Étrécourt.

Sunday, May 20th.—We made a fairly early start this morning, moving off from camp at about 7.30 A.M., and marched on viâ Moislains and Cléry to Curlu-sur-Somme—about fourteen miles in all. It was

a very hot day, and an exceedingly trying march for the men, who were completely out of training for marching. After three hours' marching we had an hour's rest for dinners, and that gave them a new lease of strength. No. 3 Company was wonderful. Not a single man fell out, although some of the men—the older ones—would have had ample excuse for doing so, but they all of them stuck it heroically: whereby we made our name, for all the other Companies had casualties, and No. 4 disgraced itself by losing about forty men. We were quartered in huts at Curlu, about a quarter of a mile from the river, and everybody—officers and men—went down and bathed in it. It was splendidly refreshing. Afterwards I lay down and had a bit of a sleep. Early to bed.

Monday, May 21st.—We did not start so early this morning, as the 2nd Coldstream were marching in front of us to-day. We moved off at about 9.20. None of my platoon had gone sick, although some of them had had pretty bad feet last night, and I wondered whether we should be able to keep our good name to-day. We marched viâ Maricourt and Billon (where we stopped for lunch) and Bray to Morlancourt. It was about eleven miles in all, and although some of the older men were a bit done towards the finish, everyone managed to stick it all right. The other Companies, too, were on their mettle, and had no casualties to-day. True, it was a much cooler day, with some rain. Morlancourt was a real inhabited French village, and my first experience of billets in this country. For the men

the accommodation was not luxurious : they simply slept, tightly packed, on the floor of barns or empty houses. But the officers were quartered in inhabited houses. We had a comfortable little Mess in a combination of a Boulangerie and a farm ; and Bagenal and I had sleeping accommodation in another old farm a few minutes' walk away. My bedroom was incredibly dirty, but had a comfortable feather bed, and when the windows had been forced open, was light and airy, while my servant was able to get rid of most of the surface dirt the next morning.

Tuesday, May 22nd.—A quiet day for everyone ! Rifle and billet inspection in the morning, and kit inspection in the afternoon. In the evening I was inoculated.

Wednesday, May 23rd.—I remained in bed all day, as I felt a little run down, and when the Doctor visited me in the evening, my temperature was up to $101\cdot4^{\circ}$. I read spasmodically, but slept for the greater part of the day.

Thursday, May 24th.—To-day I felt quite fit in myself, though my arm was still stiff. I got up after breakfast, and in the afternoon walked the one and a half miles to the baths at Ville, and had a good hot bath there. On the way back I watched our officers playing football against No. 4 Field Ambulance.

Friday, May 25th.—My arm was a bit stiff, but otherwise I was quite fit to-day and doing duty again. I went for a short run with the Company before breakfast, and in the morning paraded with the

Company for platoon drill and musketry. This morning we saw the first of our new Commanding Officer, Major Rocke, who has come and taken the place of our beloved Alex.

At the end of the morning we had a short lecture by Col. Heywood, G.S.O.1 of the Division, on 'Making a Plan.' In the afternoon I went to the pictures—showing in a local church—a most amusing show.

Saturday, May 26th.—This morning I was out on a tactical scheme under the new C.O. In the afternoon most of the officers from our Battalion journeyed over to Méricourt to watch the 2nd Brigade Sports. Fortunately, Bagenal and I got a lift in a motor lorry. The sports were in the meadow by the river—a very pretty spot—and were perfectly organised, and the day was splendidly fine. Our 2nd Battalion won every event, and our late C.O. won the Open Steeplechase; so altogether it was a most successful afternoon. I had tea with Synge and Hannay in the marquee there. Bagenal and I walked the four miles back here in time for dinner. Murphy¹ and Watson from the Field Ambulance came to dinner, and we had a very cheery evening with them.

Sunday, May 27th.—I took the Church of England parade to-day, and we had an open-air service with the 2nd Coldstream. Afterwards I turned out guards, &c., as picquet officer. The afternoon and evening I spent quietly—reading, writing, and sleeping.

¹ Dr. Basil Murphy, of Wallasey, Cheshire.

Monday, May 28th.—I was under instruction at a Court Martial this morning. Major Brand, of the 2nd Coldstream, was interesting and good as chairman; and the case, which was the robbery of a French civilian, quite difficult and instructive. After it, I bicycled out to where the Company was preparing for a trench-to-trench attack. My platoon did not do badly, but there was a certain amount of muddle, and a great deal of strafing by the Brigadier, and it was ordered that we repeat the exercise next day.

Tuesday, May 29th.—This morning I marched the company down to the Somme to have a bathe. It was muddy, and I certainly emerged from the water dirtier than when I entered it. Then we marched up to the spot where we had done the attack yesterday. The repetition to-day was very successful, and after it we had lunch, and then marched home. This evening Alex and Baggallay dined with us. The former is a wonderfully charming person.

Wednesday, May 30th.—We were leaving Morlancourt to-day, so there was not much work done. Simply rifle inspection, cleaning up of billets, packing, &c. In the afternoon we marched over to Dernancourt—Edge Hill Station—and entrained there. We started off with most unusual punctuality, at about a quarter to 8, and had a really very comfortable night journey. First of all we had a very excellent dinner, and at about 10 o'clock we stopped for the first time just outside Amiens. When we started again, I settled down for the night. There were only four of us in the carriage, so each had half of

a seat, and I slept fairly well, waking up at Calais. Then I cleaned up and had a little food, and our next stop was at St. Omer. From there we went by a rather circuitous route to Cassel Station.

Thursday, May 31st.—At Cassel we detrained, and the men had breakfast off the cookers, while we had excellent omelettes and coffee at an *estaminet*. Then we marched seven miles to Renescure, where we were to be quartered. It was a very different kind of country from the Somme—far flatter, and intersected with dikes, with long, straight *pavé* roads. The men were all billeted in barns—our company immediately facing the Headquarters Mess—from which we augured trouble to come. Our own Mess was in a neighbouring farm-house, exceedingly comfortable. There was, however, a shortage of rooms, and I spent a part of the afternoon in looking about for a billet for myself. Ultimately I found one, but a district allotted to the R.E., so I had no security of tenure. Then a good bath and change of clothing. An excellent dinner in our new quarters.

Friday, June 1st.—Not a very hard day. Light training in the morning, and the rest of the day was simply devoted to settling in. I had to change my billet to conform with R.E. arrangements, but got quite a nice little room in an adjoining farm-house.

Saturday, June 2nd.—Run before breakfast. Roll call at 7.15. Parade for training at 9.30, on which we marched to the wood near by, and did a little bayonet fighting, &c. In the afternoon we had to do an examination on trench warfare by the

orders of our new C.O. After tea Moodie and I went in to St. Omer, getting a lift in an ambulance lorry. We did some shopping in the town, which is not a bad one, and listened to a band in the park there. Then we had dinner in Vincent's Café, where I met Imaretinski, who told me what a delightful time he had had in hospital at Étretat after leaving me in the Casualty Clearing Station in April, and made me quite envious when he reminded me that I might have gone there with him if I had not asked to stay behind. We dined together, and then Moodie and I made our way back, partly on foot and partly by lifts on lorries.

Sunday, June 3rd.—Church of England open-air service at 11.30, at the end of which I stayed for Communion. I came on as picquet officer in the afternoon, so did not go out of the billet except to watch a little, not very expert, polo, the Machine Gunners had got up in a field near by.

Monday, June 4th.—This morning we spent in the field behind Company Billets, doing first Company Drill and Rifle exercises under the Battalion Sergeant-Major, and then a little bomb throwing. There were many unpleasant rumours circulating this morning regarding impending changes of officers between companies. First Joyce, and then I, heard that we were to be transferred to No. 4 Company, which heaven forbid! Ultimately, however, the arrival of Rupert Grayson from England led to a postponement of all changes, and he was posted temporarily to No. 3. Hot bath in the afternoon.

Tuesday, June 5th.—I was under instruction on a Court Martial this morning, so did not go out training with the Company. Otherwise the day passed quietly like any other. The weather still gorgeous.

Wednesday, June 6th.—This morning we went out to the Forêt de Clairmarais, a mile away, for training, and practised wood fighting. In the afternoon the Brigadier lectured all the officers of the Brigade on trench attacks. Fortunately, the lecture was just outside our Mess—this we thoroughly appreciated, as a thunderstorm started just before the lecture, and some people must have got very wet going home after it.

Thursday, June 7th.—Training in the forest again—this time musketry, bayonet fighting, &c. To-day the attack by our own army (the 2nd) on the Messines Ridge started (and apparently ended too). We got a budget of telegrams about it during the day, and it seems to have been the most successful thing that ever was.

Friday, June 8th.—To-day we went wood fighting again—this time our company against No. 2; but we were defending, and most of the morning was spent in waiting for an attack, which was over, almost as soon as it developed. I dined with Fox of the 75th Field Company, R.E., our near neighbours here, and had quite a pleasant evening, including a little Bridge.

Saturday, June 9th.—We made an early start this morning, going off for a route march at 7 o'clock.

The day was not too hot, and it was a very pleasant march through Nieppe and round by the Forest—about ten miles in all. During the afternoon I read and slept. This evening we had a great Battalion dinner, at which the 44th Field Ambulance were our guests. It was held in Madame's drawing-room at our Mess, and was a most 'splendicious' affair—an excellent dinner, followed by song and dance and much fun, lasting until nearly 1. The Field Ambulance were all in great form, and we couldn't have had a better evening.

Sunday, June 10th.—Church of England service immediately after breakfast. Then Grayson, Bagenal, and I journeyed in to St. Omer on a motor lorry. After a little shopping, we met Vaughan Morgan, of the 2nd Battalion, for lunch. In the afternoon I had a good hot bath at the Officers' Club, and after tea Vaughan Morgan took us home in a car he had possession of. Early to bed to-night. A heavy thunderstorm during the night.

Monday, June 11th.—This morning the Company drilled under the B.S.M. (who gave it as his opinion that in a Drill Competition we should beat any other company), and did some bomb throwing in the field behind Battalion Headquarters. In the afternoon we got ready for a move the next day to Moringhem for musketry.

Tuesday, June 12th.—Our move to-day was not an early one. We paraded at about 9.30, and marched for two hours before halting for a light lunch. Then on for another three hours to Moringhem. It was

a hot day and a trying march, but the men stuck it well, and no one from No. 3 Company fell out. On arrival at billets, we platoon commanders stood our platoons beer in recognition of the excellent way in which they had stood it. No. 3 were alone in Moringhem, so we messed apart from No. 4. Early to bed in quite a comfortable billet.

Wednesday, June 13th.—Out of bed at 3.30, and on parade at 4.30. Two and a half miles' walk to the range. Then we started firing, and kept it up until about 4 P.M. My platoon shot well at 200 yards, but rather dropped at 300, and finished for the day no higher than 9th. Again early to bed in preparation for another early start. The range was a first-rate one.

Thursday, June 14th.—The day started as early as yesterday, and shooting went on until about 1.30. My platoon shot as if inspired, and made easily the best shooting of the morning, bringing their position in the order of platoons up to 4th, and thus becoming entitled to a quarter of a barrel of stout on return to quarters in the evening. At 3 we marched off, and reached our old quarters at Renescure at 7. It was a hot march, and the platoon appreciated its stout.

Friday, June 15th.—We rested this morning, our first duty being a talk from the Commanding Officer at 11 o'clock, in which he spoke generally about 'The Attack,' told us we had been transferred from the 2nd (Plumer's) to the 5th (Gough's) Army, which had taken over the line north from about

Ypres; how far was not clear, but rumour had it that we had taken possession of the line all the way to the sea, and had sent the Belgians away on indefinite 'leave.' Here it seemed likely that the push would come, and it was hinted that the Pilkem Ridge might be our objective. We were also told that Sir Douglas Haig regarded the chances of the next push being really decisive very favourably, and sincerely trusted that the war would be over before the winter.

In the afternoon the Battalion held a Gymkhana, run by Alex, and exceedingly successful—all the usual military sports, tilting the bucket, riding the pole, &c., and ending with Irish dances, after which General M'Calmont gave away the prizes: the whole to the strains of the Coldstream Band under Mackenzie Rogan.

Saturday, June 16th.—This morning we left Renescure to move up the line. The march started at about 7, the whole Brigade moving together (with of course an interval between Battalions). It was intensely hot, and some of the men found difficulty in sticking it, even up to the luncheon halt at 11. After lunch we had another four or five miles to go, and only averted casualties by tremendous exertions. We were quartered for the night in the fields by Ondezelee, and got a small room for a Mess.

Sunday, June 17th.—We marched on to-day to the woods near Proven—a five-hour march, again in intense heat, and I had one man of my platoon fall out with sunstroke. The battalion had a very

thick wood allotted to it for quarters, and constructed bivouacs and put up tents in it. Our Mess had a small cottage just out of the wood, and we slept in tents in an adjoining field. We were now in Belgium—we had crossed the frontier in the morning—and found the new patois very difficult to understand. We were now only nine or ten miles from the line.

Monday, June 18th.—To-day was one of rest. We lay in bed late, and our only parade was for rifle and kit inspection. After it I weeded out my kit, and sent home three parcels of stuff, and did some letter-writing.

Tuesday, June 19th.—I had to take 100 men from the Company on an ammunition-loading fatigue to-day. Lorries called for us, and took us round by Poperinghe to a spot near Swiss Cottage Station (not far from Woesten)—about four miles from the line. Then the men had to unload 18-pounder ammunition (in boxes of 1 cwt.) from lorries, and build up a dump. It was very heavy work, and went on from 11 A.M. to 7 P.M.—quite a hard day. Occasional shells dropped in our vicinity, but none nearer than 200 yards from us. Lorries took us back at 7. A thundery day.

Wednesday, June 20th.—A wettish day, spent almost entirely in billets. After tea, Bagenal and I had hot baths at the Divisional Baths, and then picked up a lift into Poperinghe. We walked round the town and then had dinner (a rather bad dinner) at Skindle's Restaurant. Afterwards we looked in

at the Officers' Club—a comfortable spot—and then got a lift back in a flying corps tender.

Thursday, June 21st.—Another rather bad day, most of it spent indoors reading and writing.

Friday, June 22nd.—Very wet again. In the evening I was asked to become Mess President, and unravel the rather tangled and disordered affairs of Nos. 3 and 4 Mess.

Saturday, June 23rd. — Much finer to-day. Parades during the morning. In the afternoon I took over the Mess and began to look into its workings, and after tea was in charge of the Company bathing.

Sunday, June 24th.—This morning I had to take out a fatigue of sixty men to pitch tents for the Corps. We were kept waiting for over four hours, but when the work actually turned up, it did not take very long, and we were back in our quarters soon after 5. Then we learned that the Battalion was moving the next day farther up the line.

Monday, June 25th.—It was not an early start. We paraded at 8.30 all that was left of a Battalion, the greater part of which had gone away on fatigues, and marched about six miles to a wood about a mile north-west of Woesten. There we were planted, and told that we should be supplied with bivouacs. Fortunately, these arrived before night, as it started to rain about 7, and went on until morning. We had a barn for a Mess-room, so had nothing to complain of. Hannay and Keenan, of the 2nd Battalion, who are quartered only about a mile from us, came

in to tea, and by their invitation MacMahon and I went over to dinner with them. It was a pleasant evening, dinner being enlivened by a gallant Boche, who flew right over the camp, regardless of shells and bullets, and then returned calmly to his own land. We had a very wet walk back through the woods.

Tuesday, June 26th.—To-day was a quiet one—just a short parade in the morning, and most of the rest of the day spent by the men in digging their slits in the ground, in which to shelter in the event of our being shelled. In the afternoon I wrote letters, and after dinner went to an open-air concert by the 3rd Coldstream, whose camp was just next to ours.

Wednesday, June 27th.—To-day I had to take a fatigue about four miles off in the direction of Proven. There we were given work to do erecting messes, &c., for a Brigade of the 29th Division, which arrived itself during the morning—a horrid scandal, as it is work we always have to do for ourselves in similar circumstances, and I put in a complaint to that effect. However, we got back by 3 o'clock. A quiet evening. Leggatt of the 2nd Coldstream in to dinner.

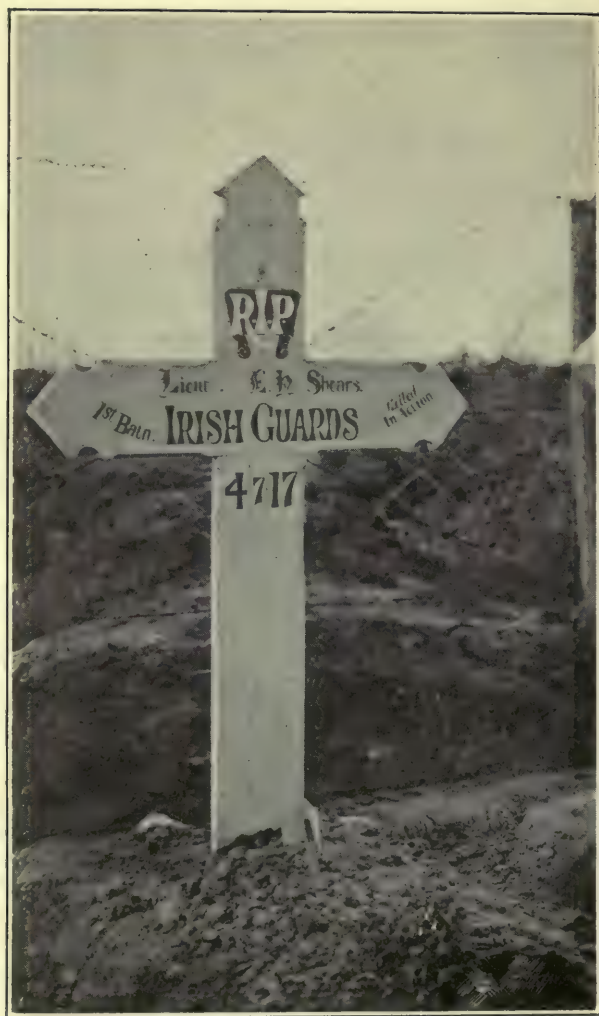
Thursday, June 28th.—This morning we were disturbed at breakfast by three heavy shells, which landed unpleasantly near our quarters—some of the bits falling just outside our Mess-room door, and another one landing only a few yards from 1 and 2 Mess. We had quite a short parade in the

morning, and then made ready for a move to Roussol Farm two or three miles away, where we were to be in Brigade Service. We marched there early in the afternoon. It was quite a comfortable camp—partly huts, partly farm buildings—with real wire beds to lie on. We settled in during the evening, but had a very disturbed night, as the Hun was dropping shells round in our camp from about 11 o'clock to 2. I think he was searching for our battery positions, but he actually got three direct hits on the camp, fortunately only killing one man and wounding three (one of these our C.S.M., Whelan—fortunately only very slightly wounded). We did not at all like being shelled with such accuracy while in reserve.

Friday, June 29th.—Nothing at all doing to-day, and we sat about in deck chairs outside the Mess. Shelling again during the night, but not so violently as yesterday.

Saturday, June 30th.—Another idle day, followed—to our surprise and delight—by a perfectly quiet night.

Sunday, July 1st.—Again nothing doing, for as our Camp is under observation from the Hun balloons, it is impossible to move about much. I went to service in the Church Army Hut in the morning, and stayed for Communion. In the afternoon there was a good deal of heavy shelling, and bits of shrapnel were flying about the camp. However, fortunately no damage was done. After tea, Eyre, Maxwell, and I went a walk over to Woesten to have



a look at the damage done to it. The old church there was

NOTE BY HIS MOTHER

At this point the Diary ends abruptly. Two days later Ted went to the front line trenches at Boesinghe, where he was hit by a fragment of a big German shell, which penetrated his steel helmet, killing him instantaneously. This happened on Wednesday, July 4th. He was buried the next day in a new British cemetery at Canada Farm, Elverdinghe, near Ypres.

'He being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord.'—Wisdom of Solomon iv. 13, 14.

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